

PRAGMATISM AND IDEALISM

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# PRAGMATISM

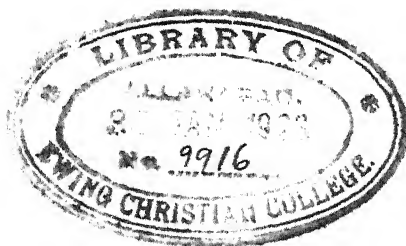
AND

# IDEALISM

BY

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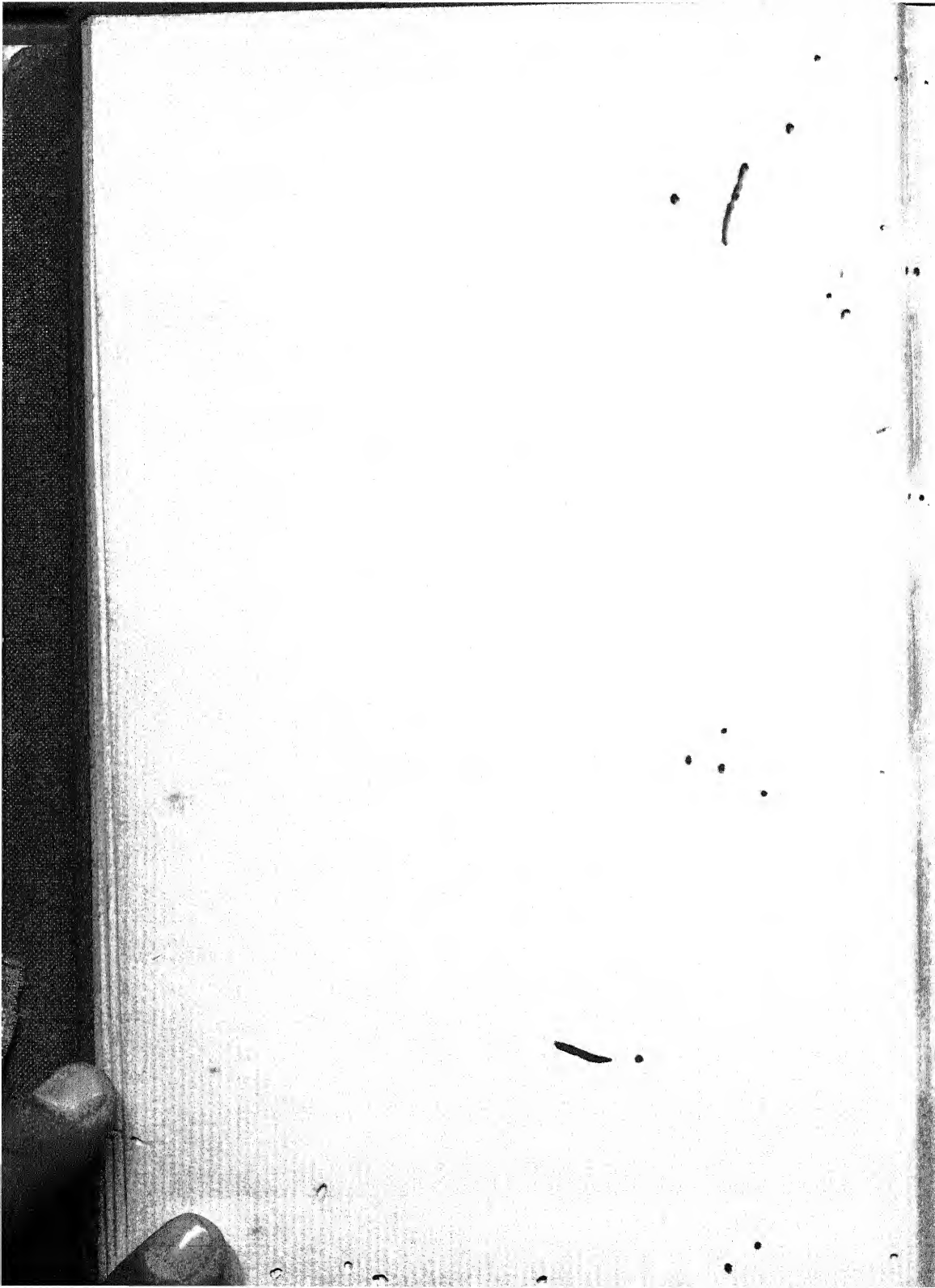
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## PREFACE

WHAT is attempted in this book is an examination of the Pragmatist philosophy in its relations to older and newer tendencies in the thought and practice of mankind.

While a good deal has been written within the last ten years upon Pragmatism, the issue that it represents is still an open one—to judge at least from recent books and reviews, and from recent official discussions. And there seems to be a favourable opportunity for a general account of the whole subject and for an estimate of its significance.

In the opening chapter and elsewhere, both in the text and in the footnotes, I have put together some things about the development and the affiliations of Pragmatism, and of pragmatist tendencies, that may not be altogether new to the professional student. Such a presentation, or general conspectus, I have found to be a necessity in the way of a ~~base~~ both for discussion and for rational comprehension. Taken along with the original pronouncements of James and his *confrères*

it affords an indication of the philosophy to which the pragmatists would fain attain, and of the modification of rationalistic philosophy they would fain effect.

The chapter upon Pragmatism as Americanism is put forth in the most tentative spirit possible, and I have thought more than once of withholding it. Something in this connexion, however, is, in my opinion, needed to cause us to regard the pragmatist philosophy as resting upon a very real tendency of the civilized world of to-day—a tendency that is affecting us all whether we like it or not.

The chapter upon Pragmatism and Anglo-Hegelian Rationalism is also offered with some degree of reservation and misgiving, for, like many of my contemporaries, I owe nearly everything in the way of my introduction to philosophy to the great Neo-Kantian and Neo-Hegelian movement. In its place, I had some months ago a more general chapter upon Pragmatism and Rationalism, containing the results of material that I had been elaborating upon the development of English Neo-Hegelianism. At the last moment I substituted what is here offered upon the significant high-water output of Hegelianism represented in Dr. Bosanquet's Edinburgh Gifford Lectures.

In regard to the note upon the Pragmatist elements in the philosophy of Bergson I ought, perhaps, to say that I kept away from Bergson's

last two books until I had written out what had been growing up in my own mind about the activism of Pragmatism and its relations to Idealism. I have found confirmation for much of my own thought in the teaching of this remarkable and significant thinker, and I regret the partial representation of it that is here submitted.

Having crossed the ocean for the printing of my book, I have in some cases lost or misplaced references that I intended to use or to verify. For this I crave the indulgence of readers and critics.

I am indebted to the following gentlemen for much kind help and criticism in the revision of my manuscript and proof-sheets for the press: my brother, the Rev. Victor Caldwell, M.A., of Patna, Ayrshire; Professor John Laird of Queen's University, Belfast; Professor James Seth of the University of Edinburgh; Professor P. T. Lafleur of M'Gill University. I also owe much in this same connexion to recent conversations with Professors A. Lalande and D. Parodi of Paris, upon Pragmatism and contemporary philosophy generally.

LONDON, *September* 1913.



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# PRAGMATISM AND IDEALISM

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

PRAGMATISM has by this time received so much attention in the reflective literature of the day that any writer upon the subject may now fairly presume upon a general acquaintance with its main principles and contentions. Indeed, it is probable that most thinking people may be credited with the ability to have formed some sort of judgment of their own about a philosophy whose main contention is that true ideas are working ideas, and that truth itself, like a creed or a belief, is simply a working valuation of reality. There are still, however, some things to be said, at least in English, upon the place and the meaning of Pragmatism in the philosophical reconstruction that is generally felt to be so necessary to-day.

As far as the external signs of any such vital relation between Pragmatism and our recent academic philosophy are concerned, the reader may be aware, to begin with, that there have been

many important concessions<sup>1</sup> made to pragmatists by such representative rationalists as Mr. Bradley and Professor Taylor, not to speak of others,<sup>2</sup> and Pragmatism has certainly had a very powerful effect upon the professional philosophy of both England and Germany, judging at least from the extent to which many of the more prominent representatives of philosophy in these countries have apparently been compelled to accord to it at least an official recognition.<sup>3</sup>

Pragmatism, again, in consequence of the different receptions that it has met with at the hands of its friends and its foes, has undergone various phases of exposition and of modification, although it has not yet, nor is it on the whole likely to have, a philosophical output comparable to that of Idealism. It has become more and more conscious of its own affiliations and relations to older, and to broader doctrines, declaring itself, in the hands of Professor James and his friends, to be but a new name for older ways of thinking.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the concessions and the fresh statements of the problem of philosophy, and the "clearing of the ground," etc., referred to on p. 76 and p. 74. Also p. 27 in reference to the stir and the activity that have been excited by the pragmatist controversy. See also p. 230, in the eighth chapter, in reference to some things in such a typical intellectualist as Professor Bosanquet that may be construed as a concession to Pragmatism and Humanism.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Edward Caird affirmed in his memoir of his brother (Principal John Caird) that idealists admit some pragmatist charges.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Stein, a contemporary European authority, to whom we shall again refer below, says, for example, in his well-known articles in the *Archiv für Philosophie* (1908), in reference to Pragmatism, that we have had nothing like it [as a 'movement'] "since Nietzsche" ("Der Pragmatismus," p. 9).

And it has succeeded, in a measure, in clearing itself from liability to the superficial interpretation that it met with a few years ago, when it was scoffed at for teaching that you may believe "what you like," for speaking, for example, as if the "theoretical" consequences of truth were not to be considered as well as the "practical." Although still resting in the main upon an outspoken declaration of war against Rationalism, it is no longer blind to the place and the value of thought or the "concept," in the matter of the interpretation of our experience.

Pragmatism, as the theory is generally understood, rests in the main upon the work of three men, Professors James and Dewey of America, and Dr. Schiller of Oxford. The fact, along doubtless with other things, that these men have ere now been spoken of as occupying a right, a left, and a centre in the new movement, is presumably an indication that it has already received its highest theoretical expression—presumably in the California pamphlet of Professor James, or in the famous *Popular Science Monthly* article of Peirce, canonized as the patron saint of the movement by James.

Whether this be so or not, it has been in the main the work of James to set forth the meaning of Pragmatism as a philosophy of everyday life, as the theory of the attitude of man as man to the world in which he finds himself. Dr. Schiller, again, it is claimed, has done much to set forth

Pragmatism to the world as an essentially humanistic philosophy, recognizing and providing for the rights of faith and of feeling in determining our beliefs and our theories about things. This philosophy has "much in common with what in other quarters is called Personalism." It cannot, however, be differentiated so sharply as Dr. Schiller apparently would have us believe from the many manifestations of this philosophy that abound in modern times, from Fichte, and from Lotze, down to men who are still living—Eucken and others. The ingenious Professor Dewey, moreover, is the champion of the scientific, or the empirical, or the "instrumental" method in philosophy, and has worked hard and successfully at the reform which he thinks must take place in logical and philosophical conceptions when interpreted as simply tools or devices for the economy of our thought.

When, in pragmatist fashion, we seek to judge of Pragmatism by this last-mentioned matter of its results, by the things it has enabled its advocates to accomplish, we find that we may, to begin with, speak in the following terms of the work of Professor James. He has certainly indicated how the pragmatist method may be applied to the solution of some of the ordinary difficulties of reflective thought; about, for example, the nature of matter or the nature of the soul, or about the old opposition between the "one" and the "many," about such concepts as "thing," "kinds," "time," "space," the "fancied," the "real," and so on. In all

such cases an answer, he holds, is obtained by putting, say, the initial difficulty in the following form: "What practical difference can it make now that the world should be run by matter or by spirit?"

A fair illustration of his meaning here would be his own characteristic attitude, so far as the philosophy of religion is concerned, to the so-called "theistic" proofs that have been part of the stock in trade of rational theology. A "necessary being" and a "whole of truth" and the "Absolute"<sup>1</sup> are not, he would hold, what the average man understands by God; they have hardly any perceptible effect upon life and conduct—the all-important matter in the thought of God as he conceives it. Only those notions, he would have it, which can be interpreted by the thought of the "difference" they make to our practical conduct are real notions at all—"Providence," say, or "God" as the guarantor of the reality and the permanence of the moral order, and so on. The "soul," again, he would hold, "is good for just so much and no more." And a similar thing, too, would be true about Berkeley's "matter," or about the "matter" of the materialists.<sup>2</sup> This latter, for instance, cannot

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VIII., where I discuss the natural theology that bases itself upon these supposed principles of a "whole of truth" and the "Absolute."

<sup>2</sup> This statement I think would be warranted by the fact of the tendency of the newer physical science of the day to substitute an electrical, for the old material, or corpuscular, conception of matter, or by the admission, for example, of a contemporary biologist



possibly do all it is claimed to be able to do in the way of an explanation of the order of the world and the phenomena of life.

Then again, James has written a great many pages upon the so-called deeper view of human nature (as inclusive of will and "emotion" in addition to mere thought) taken by Pragmatism in comparison with that entertained by Rationalism. We shall have occasion to return to this point.

He has made it clear, too, that it was an unfair interpretation of Pragmatism to take it as a plea for believing what you like, as was said above. Our experience, he puts it, must be consistent, the "parts with the parts," and the "parts with the whole." Beliefs must not clash with other beliefs, the mind being wedged tightly between the coercion of the sensible order and that of the ideal order. By "consequences," too, he contends we may mean intellectual or theoretical consequences as well as practical consequences.

He has also, along with his brother-pragmatists, raised the question of the nature of Truth, attaining to such important results as the following: (1) there is no such thing as pure truth, or ready-made truth; (2) the "copy-theory" of truth is unintelligible.<sup>1</sup> We shall later be obliged to

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of importance (Verworn, *General Physiology*, p. 39) that "all attempts to explain the psychical by the physical must fail." The actual problem is . . . not in explaining psychical by physical phenomena but rather in reducing to its psychical elements physical, like all other psychical phenomena."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 81, and p. 150.

examine the more controversial positions that (3) truth is not an end in itself, but a means towards vital satisfaction; (4) truth is the "expedient" in the way of thinking, as the right is the expedient<sup>1</sup> in the way of acting, and so on.

Further, Professor James finds that Pragmatism leaves us with the main body of our common-sense beliefs [Peirce holds practically the same thing], such as the belief in "freedom"—as a "promise and a relief," he adds; and the belief in the religious outlook upon life, in so far as it "works." This is the attitude and the tenor of the well-known books on *The Will to Believe* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.<sup>2</sup> "Our acts, our turning-places, where we seem to ourselves to make ourselves and grow, are the parts of the world to which we are closest, the parts of which our knowledge is the most intimate and complete. Why should we not take them at their face-value?" And yet, as against this attitude, Professor James elsewhere finds himself unable to believe "that our human experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe." It is the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V. pp. 136, 138, where we examine, or reflect upon, the ethics of Pragmatism.

<sup>2</sup> The importance of these volumes in the matter of the development, in the minds of thinking people everywhere, of a dynamic and an organic (instead of the older rationalistic and intellectualistic) conception of religion and of the religious life cannot possibly be over-estimated. Of course it is only right to add here that such a dynamic and organic view of religion is the property not only of Professor James and his associates, but also of the army of workers of to-day in the realms of comparative religion and anthropology.

emergence of many such incoherences in his writings that gives to his pragmatist philosophy of religion a subjective and temperamental character, and makes it seem to be lacking in any objective basis. "If radically tough, the hurly-burly of the sensible facts of nature will be enough for you, and you will need no religion at all. If radically tender, you will take up with the more monistic form of religion: the pluralistic form—that is, reliance on possibilities that are not necessities—will not seem to offer you security enough."<sup>1</sup> He "inclines," on the whole, to "Meliorism," treating satisfaction as neither necessary nor impossible; the pragmatist lives in "the world of possibilities."

These words show clearly how difficult it is to pin down Professor James to any single intelligible philosophy of belief, if belief be interpreted as in any sense a "commerce" of the soul with objective realities, as something more than a merely generous faith in the gradual perfection or betterment of human society.

"Religious experience," as he puts it in his *Pluralistic Universe*, "peculiarly so called, needs, in my opinion, to be carefully considered and interpreted by every one who aspires to reason out a more complete philosophy." In this same book, it is declared, however, on the one hand, that "we have outgrown the old theistic orthodoxy, the God of our popular Christianity being simply one member of a pluralistic system"; and yet,

<sup>1</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 300.



on the other hand, and with equal emphasis, that "we finite minds may simultaneously be conscious with one another in a supernatural intelligence."<sup>1</sup>

The book on *The Meaning of Truth* seems to return, in the main, to the American doctrine of the strenuous life as the only courageous, and therefore true, attitude to beliefs, as the life that contains, in the plenitude of its energizing, the answer to all questions. "Pluralism affords us," it openly confesses, "no moral holidays, and it is unable to let loose quietistic raptures, and this is a serious deficiency in the pluralistic philosophy which we have professed." Professor James here again attacks Absolutism in the old familiar manner, as somehow unequal to the complexity of things, or the pulsating process of the world, casting himself upon the philosophy of experience, and upon the evident reality of the "many" and of the endless variety of the relations of things, in opposition to the abstract simplicity of the "one," and the limited range of a merely logical, or mathematical, manner of conceiving of reality. "The essential service of Humanism, as I conceive the situation, is to have seen that, though one part of experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is in any one of several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-sustaining and leans on nothing. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Or an admission like the following in the *Meaning of Truth* (p. 243): "It may be that the truest of all beliefs shall be that in transsubjective realities."

"It gets rid of the standing problems of Monism and of other metaphysical systems and paradoxes."<sup>1</sup>

Professor James exhibits, however, at the same time a very imperfect conception of philosophy, holding that it gives us, in general, "no new range of practical power," ignoring, as it were, the difference between philosophy and poetry and religion and mere personal enthusiasm. And he leaves the whole question of the first principles of both knowledge and conduct practically unsettled. These things are to him but conceptual tools,<sup>2</sup> and "working" points of departure for our efforts, and there seems in his books to be no way of reducing them to any kind of system. And he makes, lastly, a most unsuccessful attempt at a theory of reality. Reality is to him sometimes simply a moving equilibrium of experience, the "flux" we have already referred to; sometimes the fleeting generations of men who have thought out for us all our philosophies and sciences and cults and varied experiences, and sometimes the "common-sense world in which we find things partly joined and partly disjoined." It is sometimes, too, other things even than these. In a chapter of the book upon *Pragmatism*<sup>3</sup> it is stated in italics that "reality is, in general, what truths have to take account of," and that it has three parts: (1) "the flux of our sensations," and (2) the "relations that obtain between our sensations, or between their

<sup>1</sup> *Meaning of Truth*, p. 124, 5.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 40 and p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> *Pragmatism*, pp. 244-245.

copies in our minds," and (3) "the previous truths of which every new inquiry takes account." Then again, in *A Pluralistic Universe*,<sup>1</sup> it is declared that "there may ultimately never be an All-form at all, that the substance of reality may never get totally collected . . . and that a distributive form of reality, the Each-form, is logically as acceptable and empirical and probable as the All-form." This is the theory of the outspoken "radical empiricism"<sup>2</sup> which is the contention of the volume upon *The Meaning of Truth*, the main effort of which seems to be to show again that the world is still in the process of making. It has the

<sup>1</sup> *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> In respect of James' later doctrine of "radical empiricism" we may quote, for the sake of intelligibility, from Professor Perry (his friend and literary executor) the following: "James' empiricism means, then, first, that ideas are to be tested by direct knowledge, and, second, that knowledge is limited to what can be presented. There is, however, a third consideration which is an application of these, and the means of avoiding a difficulty which is supposed to be fatal to them. This is what James calls 'radical empiricism,' the discovery that 'the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more nor less so, than the things themselves.' 'Adjacent minima of experience' are united by the 'persistent identity of certain units, or emphases, or points, or objects, or members . . . of the experience-continuum.' Owing to the fact that the connexions of things are thus found along with them, it is unnecessary to introduce any substance below them, or any subject above them, to hold things together" (*Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 365). In regard to this radical empiricism, I am obliged, as a Kantian, to say that, to my mind, it represents the reduction of all Pragmatism and Empiricism to an impossibility—to the fatuous attempt (exploded for ever by Hume) to attempt to explain knowledge and experience *without first principles* of some kind or another. It is a "new Humism," a thing which no one who has penetrated into the meaning of Hume's *Treatise* can possibly advocate. A philosophy without first principles, or a philosophy that reduces the relations between experiences to mere "bits" of experience, is indeed no philosophy at all.

additional drawback of bringing Pragmatism down not only to the level of radical empiricism, but to that of common-sense realism or dualism [the belief in the two independent realities of matter and mind], and to that of the "copy-theory"<sup>1</sup> of truth, from which both Pragmatism and Radical Empiricism are especially supposed to deliver us. "I will say here again, for the sake of emphasis, that the existence of the object . . . is the only reason, in innumerable cases, why the idea does work successfully. . . . Both Dewey and I hold firmly . . . to objects independent of our own judgments."<sup>2</sup> Much of all this is, no doubt, like surrendering philosophy altogether.

In the case of Dr. Schiller, we may notice first his frequent and successful exhibition of the extent to which human activity enters into the constitution not only of "truth," but of "reality," of what we mean by reality. This is interwoven in his books with his whole philosophy of truth as something merely human, as "dependent upon human purposes," as a "valuation" expressive of the satisfactory, or the unsatisfactory, nature of the contents of "primary reality." It is interwoven, too, with his doctrine that reality is essentially *ελπι*, something that is still in the making, something that human beings can somehow re-make and make perfect. Then this position about truth and reality is used by him, as by James, as a ground of attack against Absolutism,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 82 and p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> The Preface, pp. xv., xix.

with its notion of a "pre-existing ideal" of knowledge and reality, as already existing in a super-sensible world, that descends magically into the passively recipient soul of man. There is no such thing, he claims, as absolute truth, and the conception of an "absolute reality" is both futile and pernicious. Absolutism, too, has an affinity to Solipsism,<sup>1</sup> the difficulties of which it can escape only by self-elimination.

Then Absolutism is, Schiller continues, "essentially irreligious,"<sup>2</sup> although it was fostered at first in England for essentially religious purposes.<sup>3</sup> It has developed there now at last, he reminds us, a powerful left<sup>4</sup> wing which, as formerly in Germany,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 159 and p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> As for Dr. Schiller's charge that Absolutism is essentially "irreligious" in spite of the fact of its having been (in England) religious at the outset, the best way of meeting this is to insist that it is mainly in its form, rather than its content, that Absolutism is (or was) irreligious in both Germany and England.

<sup>3</sup> British students of philosophy are quite well aware that it was the religious and the spiritual motive that seemed to weigh most with Hutchison Stirling and John Caird and Green in their attempts (thirty years ago) to introduce German transcendental philosophy to their fellow-countrymen. Stirling was impressed with the idea of a working correspondence between Hegelianism and Calvinism. John Caird's *animus* was against the agnosticism of Herbert Spencer and of Mansel, and he found inspiration in this connexion in Hegel's treatment of Kant's theory of the limitations of the understanding. And to Green the attractive thing about Kant was his vindication of a "spiritual principle" in "nature," and in "knowledge," and in "conduct," a principle which rendered absurd the naturalism of the evolutionary philosophy. Friends of this spiritualistic interpretation of German Critical Rationalism find its richest and fullest expression in the books of Edward Caird upon the *Evolution of Religion* and the *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*.

<sup>4</sup> The idea of a left wing is generally associated in the minds of British students with the destructive criticism of Mr. Bradley in *Appearance and Reality*, in which many, or most, of our ordinary ways of



has opened a quarrel with theology. In Absolutism, the two phases of Deity—God as moral principle, and God as an intellectual principle—"fall apart," and absolutist metaphysic has really no connexion with genuine religion. Humanism can "renew Hegelianism" by treating the making of truth as also the making of reality. Freedom is real, and may possibly "pervade the universe."<sup>1</sup> All truth implies belief, and it is obviously one of the merits of Pragmatism to bring truth and reason together. Beliefs and ideas and wishes are really essential and integral features in real knowing, and if knowing, as above, really transforms our experience, they must be treated as "real forces," which cannot be ignored by philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

Against all this would-be positive, or constructive, philosophy we must, however, record the fact that the pragmatism of Dr. Schiller breaks down altogether in the matter of the recognition of a distinction between the "discovering" of

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regarding reality (our beliefs in "primary" and "secondary" qualities of matter, in "space" and "time," in "causation," "activity," a "self," in "things in themselves," etc.) are convicted of "fatal inconsistencies." See, however, Professor Pringle-Pattison's instructive account of his book in *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, bringing out the positive side. The "left" is represented too, now, in Dr. Bosanquet's *Individuality and Value*, which we examine below as the last striking output of British transcendentalism or absolutism. See in this entire connexion Professor James Seth's recent account of the "Idealist Answers to Hume" in his *English Philosophy and Schools of Philosophy*.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 244. I find a confirmation of this idea in what a biologist like Professor Needham treats of as the "autogenetic nature of responses" (*General Biology*, p. 474) in animals.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Studies in Humanism* for all the positions referred to, or quoted, or paraphrased, in these two paragraphs.

reality and the "making" of reality. And despite the ingenuity of his essay in the first edition of *Humanism* upon "Activity and Substance,"<sup>1</sup> there is not in his writings, any more than in those of James, any coherent or adequate theory of reality. And this is the case whether we think of the "primary reality" upon which we human beings are said to "react," in our knowledge and in our action, or of the supreme reality of God's existence, of which such an interesting speculative account is given in the essay referred to. Nor is there in Dr. Schiller, any more than in James, any adequate conception, either of philosophy as a whole, or of the theory of knowledge, or of the relation of Pragmatism as a "method" (it is modestly claimed to be only such, but the position is not adhered to) to philosophy as such.<sup>2</sup> "For the pragmatic theory of knowledge initial principles are literally ἀρχαί, mere starting-points variously, arbitrarily, casually\*selected, from which we hope to try to

<sup>1</sup> This is an important essay. It reminds the modern reader, for one thing, of the importance of the natural theology of Aristotle. It is an anticipation, too, in its way, of the tendency of modern physics to substitute a dynamic for a static conception of matter, or atoms, or substance. In it Dr. Schiller points out how Aristotle's doctrine of a perfect and self-perfecting Activity [an ἐνέργεια that is not mere change or motion, but a perfect "life" involving the disappearance of "time" and imperfection] is in a sense the solution of the old [Greek] and the modern demand for the substance or essence of things. We shall take occasion (in speaking of the importance to Philosophy of the concept of activity, and in speaking of the Philosophy of Bergson) to use the same idea, to which Dr. Schiller has given an expression in this essay, of God as the eternal or the perfect life of the world.

<sup>2</sup> For a favourable estimate of the services of Dr. Schiller in regard to Pragmatism and Humanism the reader may consult the articles of Captain Knox in the *Quarterly Review*, 1909.

advance to something better. Little we care what their credentials may be. . . . And as far as the future is concerned, systems of philosophy will abound as before, and will be as various as ever, but they will probably be more brilliant in colouring and more attractive in their form, for they will certainly have to be put forward and acknowledged as works of art that bear the impress of a unique and individual soul." <sup>1</sup>

The main result of pragmatist considerations in the case of Professor Dewey is perhaps that reconsideration of the problems of logic and knowledge in the light of the facts of genetic and functional psychology which has now become fairly general on the part of English and American students of philosophy. It is through his influence generally that pragmatists seem always to be talking about the way in which we "arrive at"

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Humanism*, p. 19. The remarks made in this paragraph will have to be modified, to some extent, in view of the recent (1911) appearance of the third edition of Dr. Schiller's *Riddles of the Sphinx*. This noteworthy book contains, to say the very least, a great deal in the way of a positive ontology, or theory of being, and also many quite different rulings in respect of the nature of metaphysic and of the matter of its relation to science and to common sense. It rests, in the main, upon the idea of a perfect society of perfected individuals as at once the true reality and the end of the world-process—an idea which exists also, at least in germ, in the pluralistic philosophy of Professor James; and we shall indeed return to this practical, or sociological, philosophy as the outcome, not only of Pragmatism, but also of Idealism, as conceived by representative living thinkers. Despite, however, these many positive and constructive merits of this work of Dr. Schiller's, it is for many reasons not altogether unfair to its spirit to contend that his philosophy is still, in the main, that of a humanistic pragmatism in which both "theory" and "practice" are conceived as experimentally and as hypothetically as they are by Professor Dewey.



our beliefs, about ideas as "instruments" for the interpretation and arrangement of our experience, about the "passage" from cognitive expectation to "fulfilment," about ideas as "plans of action" and mental habits, about the growth and the utility of the truth, about the "instrumental" character of all our thinking, about beliefs as more fundamental than knowledge, and so on.

Professor Dewey has also written many more or less popular, but none the less highly valuable, short studies upon the application of an instrumentalist conception of philosophy to education and to social questions. One of his last pieces of service in this connection is a volume in which he associates Pragmatism with the general revolution effected in the entire range of the mental and moral sciences by Darwinism, with the present tendency in philosophy to turn away from ultimate questions to specific problems, and with the reform which, in his opinion, is necessary in our educational ideals<sup>1</sup> generally.

These three leading exponents of Pragmatism may be regarded as meeting the objections to philosophy urged respectively by the "man of affairs," by the "mystical, religious" man, and by the "man of science."<sup>2</sup> By this it is meant that the man of affairs will find in James an exposition of philosophy as the study of different ways of looking at the world; the mystical, religious

<sup>1</sup> See p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> See Professor Bawden's book upon Pragmatism.

man will find in Schiller a treatment of philosophy as the justification of an essentially spiritual philosophy of life; and that the scientific man will find in the writings of Dewey and his associates a treatment of philosophy as nothing else than an extension into the higher regions of thought of the same experimental and hypothetical method with which he is already familiar in the physical sciences.

In this version of the work of the three leading pragmatists it is assumed, of course, that the pragmatist philosophy is the only philosophy that can show to the average man that philosophy can really do something useful—can “bake bread,” if you will, can give to a man the food of a man. It is assumed, too, that it is the only philosophy which proceeds scientifically, that is to say, by means of observation and of hypotheses that “work,” and by subsequent deduction and by “verification.” And again, that it is the only philosophy that gives to man the realities upon which he can base his aspirations or his faith in distinction, that is to say, from the mere abstractions of Rationalism in any form.

By way of a few quotations illustrative of the fundamental contentions of the pragmatists, we may select the following: “Ideas become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience, to summarise them and get about among them by conceptional short-cuts instead of following the inter-

minable succession of particular phenomena. Any idea upon which we can ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labour—is true for just so much, true in so far forth, true instrumentally.”<sup>1</sup> “The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good for definite and assignable reasons.”<sup>2</sup> From Professor Dewey: “Thinking is a kind of activity which we perform at specific need, just as at other times we engage in other sorts of activity, as converse with a friend, draw a plan for a house, take a walk, eat a dinner, purchase a suit of clothes, etc. etc. The measure of its success, the standard of its validity is precisely the degree in which thinking disposes of the difficulty and allows us to proceed with the more direct modes of experiencing, that are henceforth possessed of more assured and deepened value.”<sup>3</sup> From Dr. Schiller’s book, *Studies in Humanism*: “Pragmatism is the doctrine that when an assertion claims truth, its consequences are always used to test its claims; that (2) the truth of an assertion depends on its application; that (3) the meaning of a rule lies in its application; that (4) all meaning depends on purpose; that (5) all mental life is purposive. It [Pragmatism] must constitute itself into (6) a systematic protest

<sup>1</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Studies in Logical Theory*, p. 2.

against all ignoring of the purposiveness of actual knowing, alike whether it is abstracted from for the sake of the imaginary, pure, or absolute reason of the rationalists, or eliminated for the sake of an equally imaginary or pure mechanism of the naturalists. So conceived, we may describe it as (7) a conscious application to logic of a teleological psychology which implies ultimately a voluntaristic metaphysic."

From these citations, and from the descriptive remarks of the preceding two paragraphs, we may perhaps be enabled to infer that our Anglo-American Pragmatism has progressed from the stage of (1) a mere method of discussing truth and thinking in relation to the problem of philosophy as a whole, (2) that of a more or less definite and detailed criticism of the rationalism that overlooks the practical, or purposive, character of most of our knowledge, to that of (3) a humanistic or "voluntaristic" or "personalistic" philosophy, with its many different associations and affiliations.<sup>1</sup> One of the last developments, for example, of this pragmatist humanism is Dr. Schiller's association of philosophy with the metaphysics of evolution, with the attempt to find the goal of the world-process and of human history in a changeless society of perfected individuals.

We shall immediately see, however, that this summary description of the growth of Pragmatism

<sup>1</sup> I endeavour to indicate what this Humanism and Personalism may be in my sixth chapter.

has to be supplemented by a recognition of (1) some of the different phases Pragmatism has assumed on the continent of Europe, (2) the different phases that may be detected in the reception or criticism accorded to it in different countries, and (3) some of the results of the pragmatist movement upon contemporary philosophy. All these things have to do with the making of the complex thing that we think of as Pragmatism and the pragmatist movement.

#### A NOTE ON THE MEANING OF "PRAGMATISM"

(1) "THE opinion that metaphysics is to be largely cleared up by the application of the following maxim for obtaining clearness of apprehension: 'Consider what effects that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object'" (Baldwin's *Philosophical Dictionary*, vol. ii. p. 321). [We can see from this citation that the application of its formulæ about "consequences" to metaphysics, or philosophy generally, must be considered as a part, or aspect, of the pragmatist philosophy.]

(2) "The doctrine that the whole meaning of a conception expresses itself in practical consequences; consequences either in the shape of conduct to be recommended, or in that of experiences to be expected, if the conception be true; which consequences would be different, if it were untrue, and must be different from the consequences by which the meaning of other conceptions is in turn expressed. If a second conception should not appear to have other consequence, then it must be really only the first conception under a different name. In methodology, it is certain that to trace and compare their respective consequences is an admirable way of establishing the different meanings of different conceptions" (*ibid.*, from Professor James).

(3) "A widely current opinion during the last quarter of a century has been that 'reasonableness' is not a good in itself, but



only for the sake of something. Whether it be so or not seems to be a synthetical question [i.e. a question that is not merely a verbal question, a question of words], not to be settled by an appeal to the Principle of Contradiction [the principle hitherto relied upon by Rationalism or Intellectualism]. . . . Almost everybody will now agree that the ultimate good lies in the evolutionary process in some way. If so, it is not in individual reactions in their segregation, but in something general or continuous. Synecism is founded on the notion that the coalescence, the becoming continuous, the becoming governed by laws, the becoming instinct with general ideas, are but phases of one and the same process of the growth of reasonableness" (*ibid.* p. 322. From Dr. Peirce, the bracket clauses being the author's).

(4) "It is the belief that ideas invariably strive after practical expression, and that our whole life is teleological. Putting the matter logically, logic formulates theoretically what is of regulative importance for life—for our 'experience' in view of practical ends. Its philosophical meaning is the conviction that all facts of nature, physically and spiritually, find their expressions in 'will'; will and energy are identical. This tendency is in agreement with the practical tendencies of American thought and American life in so far as they both set a definite end before Idealism" (Ueberweg-Heinze, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. iv., written and contributed by Professor Mattoon Monroe Curtis, Professor of Philosophy in Western Reserve University, Cleveland, U.S.A.).

(5) See also an article in *Mind* for October 1900, vol. ix. N.S., upon "Pragmatism" by the author of this book on *Pragmatism and Idealism*, referred to as one of the early sources in Baldwin's *Philosophical Dictionary* (New York and London) and in Ueberweg-Heinze's *Geschichte*, *Vierter Teil* (Berlin, 1906).

The conclusion that I am inclined to draw from the foregoing official statements (and also, say, from another official article like that of M. Lalande in the *Revue Philosophique*, 1906, on "Pragmatisme et Pragmaticisme") is that the term "Pragmatism" is not of itself a matter of great importance, and that there is no separate, intelligible, independent, self-consistent system of philosophy that may be called Pragmatism. It is a general name for the Practicalism or Voluntarism or Humanism or the Philosophy of the Practical Reason, or the Activism, or the Instrumentalism, or the Philosophy of Hypotheses, or the Dynamic Philosophy of life and things that is discussed in different ways in this book upon Pragmatism and Idealism. And it is not and cannot be independent of the traditional body of philosophical truth in relation to which it can alone be defined.

## CHAPTER II

### PRAGMATISM AND THE PRAGMATIST MOVEMENT

IN considering some of the results of pragmatist and voluntarist doctrines in the case of European writers, to whom the American-English triumvirate used to look somewhat sympathetically, we may begin with Italy, which boasted, according to Dr. Schiller (writing in 1907), of a youthful band of avowed pragmatists with a militant organ, the *Leonardo*. "Fundamentally," declares Papini,<sup>1</sup> the leader of this movement, "Pragmatism means an unstiffening of all our theories and beliefs, by attending to their instrumental value. It incorporates and harmonizes various ancient tendencies, such as Nominalism, with its protest against the use of general terms, Utilitarianism, with its emphasis upon particular aspects and problems, Positivism, with its disdain of verbal and useless questions, Kantism, with its doctrine of the primacy of practical reason, Voluntarism, with its treatment of the intellect as the tool of the will, and Freedom, and a positive

<sup>1</sup> *Journ. of Phil. Psychol.*, 1906, p. 338.

attitude towards religious questions. It is the tendency of taking all these, and other theories, for what they are worth, being chiefly a corridor-theory, with doors and avenues into various theories, and a central rallying-ground for them all." These words are valuable as one of the many confessions of the affiliations of Pragmatism to several other more or less experiential, or practical, views of philosophy. It is perfectly obvious from them that Pragmatism stands, in the main, for the apprehension of all truth as subservient to practice, as but a device for the "economy" of thought, for the grasping of the multiplicity and the complexity of phenomena. It looks upon man as made, in the main, for action, and not for speculation—a doctrine which even Mr. Peirce, by the way, now speaks of as "a stoical maxim which to me, at the age of sixty, does not recommend itself so forcibly as it did at thirty."<sup>1</sup>

"The various ideal worlds are here," continues Papini, according to the version of James,<sup>2</sup> "because the real world fails to satisfy us. All our ideal instruments are certainly imperfect. But philosophy can be regenerated . . . it can become pragmatic in the general sense of the word, a general theory of human action . . . so that philosophic thought will resolve itself into a com-

<sup>1</sup> From vol. ii. (p. 322) of Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy*. Dr. C. S. Peirce, formerly a teacher of mathematics and philosophy at Johns Hopkins University, was made by James into the father or patron saint of Pragmatism. James confesses to have been stimulated into Pragmatism by the teachings of Peirce.

<sup>2</sup> *Journ. of Phil. Psy.*, 1906, p. 340.



parative discussion of all the possible programmes for man's life, when man is once for all regarded as a *creative* being. . . . As such, man becomes a kind of god, and where are we to draw the limits? " In an article called "From Man to God," Papini, in the *Leonardo*, lets his imagination work in stretching the limits of this way of thinking.

These prophetic, or Promethean, utterances—and we must never forget that even to the Greeks philosophy was always something of a religion or a life—may be paralleled by some of the more enthusiastic and unguarded, early utterances of Dr. Schiller about "voluntarism" or "metaphysical personalism" as the one "courageous," and the only potent, philosophy; or about the "storming of the Jericho of rationalism" by the "jeers" and the "trumpetings" of the confident humanists and their pragmatic *confrères*. The underlying element of truth in them, and, for that part of it, in many of the similar utterances of many of our modern humanists, from Rabelais to Voltaire and from Shelley to Marx and Nietzsche, is, as we may see, that a true metaphysic must serve, not only as a rational system for the intellect, but as a "dynamic"<sup>1</sup> or motive for action and achievement, for the conscious activity of rational, self-conscious beings.

As for the matter of any further develop-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 78, 148; and in reference to the last striking presentation of Absolutism, p. 230.

ments<sup>1</sup> of the free, creative religion\* hinted by Papini, we had, in 1903, the solemn declaration of Professor James that "the programme of the man-god is one of the great type programmes of philosophy," and that he himself had been "slow" in coming to a perception of the full inwardness of the idea. Then it led evidently in Italy itself to a new doctrine which was trumpeted there a year or two ago in the public press as "Futurism,"<sup>2</sup> in which "courage, audacity and rebellion" were the essential elements, and which could not "abide" the mere mention of such things as "priests" and "ideals" and "professors" and "moralism." The extravagances of Prezzolini, who thinks of man as a "sentimental gorilla," were apparently the latest outcome of this anarchical individualism and practicalism. Pragmatism was converted by him into a sophisticated opportunism and a modern Machiavellism, a method of attaining contentment in one's life and of dominating one's fellow-creatures by playing upon their fancies and prejudices as does the religious charlatan or the quack doctor or the rhetorician.

The reader who may care to contemplate all

<sup>1</sup> See Bourdeau, *Pragmatisme et Modernisme*, and W. Riley in the *Journ. of Phil. Psy.*, April and May 1911; the James article, *Journ. of Phil.*, 1906; *Journ. of Phil.*, 1907, pp. 26-37, on Papini's "Introduction to Pragmatism"; *The Nation* (N.Y.), November 1907, on "Papini's view of the 'daily tragedy' of life."

<sup>2</sup> Reported to have been inaugurated by a Franco-Italian poet, Marinetti. Of the question of any possible connexion between this "Futurism" with the present Art movement bearing the same name I know nothing definite.

this radical<sup>1</sup> pragmatist enthusiasm for the New Reformation in a more accessible, and a less exaggerated, form had better perhaps consult the recent work of Mr. Sturt of Oxford on the *Idea of a Free Church*. In this work the principles of Pragmatism are applied, first, critically and in the main negatively, to the moral dogmas of traditional Christianity, and then positively to the new conception of religion he would substitute for all this—the development of personality in accordance with the claims of family and of national life. A fair-minded criticism of this book would, I think, lead to the conclusion that the changes contemplated by Mr. Sturt are already part and parcel of the programme of liberal Christianity, whether we study this in the form of the many more or less philosophical presentations of the same in modern German theology, or in the form of the free, moral and social efforts of the voluntary religion of America and England. In America many of the younger thinkers in theology and philosophy are already writing in a more or less popular manner upon Pragmatism as a philosophy that bids fair to harmonize “traditional” and “radical” conceptions of religion. One of these writers, for example, in a recent important commemorative volume,<sup>1</sup> tries to show how this may be done by interpreting the “supernatural,” not as the “trans-

<sup>1</sup> I refer to the recent volume dedicated by some of his old pupils to Professor Garman—a celebrated teacher of philosophy in one of the older colleges of the United States.

experimental," but as the "ethical" in experience, and by turning "dogmatic" into "historical theology." And it would not be difficult to find many books and addresses in which the same idea is expressed. The more practical wing of this same party endeavours to connect Pragmatism with the whole philosophy and psychology of religious conversion, as this has been worked over by recent investigators like Stanley Hall,<sup>1</sup> Starbuck,<sup>2</sup> and others, and, above all, by James in his striking volume *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.<sup>3</sup>

The fact, of course—and I shall immediately refer to it—that Pragmatism has been hailed in France as a salutary doctrine, not merely by Liberals and Evangelicals, but by devout Catholics and Anti-modernists, is perhaps enough to give us some pause in the matter of its application in the sphere of theoretical and practical religion. It is useful, it would seem, sometimes to "liberate" the spirit of man, and useful, too, at other times to connect the strivings of the individual with the more or less organized experiences of past ages.

Turning, then, to France, it is, judging from the claims of the pragmatists, and from some of

<sup>1</sup> The two large volumes on the *Psychology of Adolescence*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*.

<sup>3</sup> Even such a book—and it is no doubt in its way a genuine and a noteworthy book—as Harold H. Begbie's *Twice-born Men* is pointed to by this wing as another instance of the truth of pragmatist principles in the sphere of experimental religion. Schopenhauer, by the way, was inclined to estimate the efficacy of a religion by its power of affecting the will, of converting men so that they were able to overcome the selfish will to live. See my *Schopenhauer's System in its Philosophical Significance*.

the literature bearing upon this entire subject,<sup>1</sup> fairly evident that there has been a kind of association or relationship between Pragmatism and the following tendencies in recent French philosophy:

- (1) the "freedom" and "indeterminism" philosophy of Renouvier<sup>2</sup> and other members of the

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the declaration of James and Schiller (in the prefaces to their books and elsewhere) in respect of their attitudes to the work of men like Renouvier, Poincaré, Milhaud, Wilbois, Le Roy, Blondel, Pradines, the valuable reports of M. Lalande to the *Philosophical Review* (1906-7-8), the articles of Woodbridge Riley in the *Journal of Philosophy* (1911) upon the continental critics of Pragmatism, the books of Bourdeau, Hebert, Rey, Tonquedoc, Armand Sabatier, Schinz, Picard, Berthelot, those of Poincaré, Renouvier, Pradines, and the rest, the older books upon nineteenth-century French philosophy by men like Fouillée, Levy-Bruhl, etc. There are also valuable references upon the French pragmatists in Father Walker's *Theories of Knowledge* (in the Stoneyhurst Series), and in Professor Inge's valuable little book upon *Faith and its Psychology*.

<sup>2</sup> The outstanding representative in France during the entire second half of the nineteenth century of "Neo-Criticism" or "Neo-Kantianism," a remarkable and comprehensive thinker, to whose influence, for example, James attributed a part of his mental development. His review, the *Critique Philosophique*, was a worthy (idealist) rival of the more positivistically inclined, and merely psychological, review of Ribot, the *Revue Philosophique*. French Neo-Kantianism, holding, as Renouvier does, that Kant's ethics is the keystone of his system, is not in general inclined to the "positivism" or the "scientific" philosophy of some of the German Neo-Kantians. The critical work of Renouvier proposes some very ingenious and systematic rearrangements of Kant's philosophy of the categories, and his freedom-philosophy must certainly have done a good deal (along with the work of others) to create the atmosphere in which Bergson lives and moves to-day. With Renouvier, Neo-Kantianism merges itself too in the newer philosophy of "Personalism," and he wrote, indeed, an important book upon this very subject (*Le Personnalisme*, 1902). In this work, we find a criticism of rationalism that anticipates Pragmatism, the author explicitly contending for a substitution of the principle of "rational belief" instead of the "false principle" of demonstrable or a *priori* "evidence." Consciousness, he teaches, is the foundation of existence, and "personality" the first "causal principle" of the world (although admitting "creation" to be beyond our comprehension). He examines critically, too, the notions of the "Absolute"



Neo-Critical school, and of Boutroux and Bergson, who, "although differing from each other in many important respects," all "belong to the same movement of thought, the reaction against Hegelianism and the cult of science which has dominated France since the decline of the metaphysics of the school of Cousin";<sup>1</sup> (2) the philosophy of science and scientific hypotheses represented by writers like Poincaré,<sup>2</sup> Brunschvicg,

and of the "Unconditioned," holding that they should not be substantiated into entities. "Belief" is involved in "every act," he teaches—also another pragmatist doctrine. And like his great predecessor Malebranche, and like our English Berkeley, he teaches that God is our "natural object," the true "other" of our life. The philosophy of Personalism, the foundations of which are laid in this work, is further developed by Renouvier in a comprehensive work which he published in 1899, in conjunction with M. Prat, on *The New Monadology* (*La Nouvelle Monadologie*). This is one of the most complete presentations of a philosophy of "Pluralism" that is at the same time a "Theism"—to be associated, in my opinion, say, with the recent work of Dr. James Ward upon the *Realm of Ends*, referred to on p. 162.

<sup>1</sup> *Philos. Rev.* (1906), article by Lalande.

<sup>2</sup> H. Poincaré (talked of in recent scientific circles as one of the greatest mathematicians of history) is (he died about a year ago), so far as our present purpose is concerned, one of the important scientific writers of the day upon the subject of the "logic of hypotheses," and of the "hypothetical method" in science—the method which the pragmatists are so anxious to apply to philosophy. He seems (see his *La Science et l'Hypothèse*, as well as the later book, *La Valeur de la Science*, referred to by Lalande in his professional reports to the *Philosophical Review*) to accept to some extent the idea of the "hypothetical" character of the constructions of both the mathematical and the physical sciences, believing, however, at the same time that we must not be "unduly sceptical" about their conclusions, revealing as they do something of the "nature of reality." He discusses among other topics the theory of "energetics" of which we speak below in the case of Ostwald. He insists, too, upon the idea that the real is known only by "experience," and that this "experience" includes the comparison of the thoughts of many minds. And yet he believes to some extent in the Kantian theory of the *a priori* element in knowledge (see *La Science*, etc., p. 64). It is, however, quite un-

Le Roy,<sup>1</sup> Mithaud, Abel Rey,<sup>2</sup> and others; (3) the religious philosophy and the fideism of the followers of the spiritualistic metaphysic of Bergson, many of whom go further than he does, and "make every effort to bring him to the confessional faith";<sup>3</sup> and (4) the French philosophy of to-day that

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necessary for me to presume to enter into the large subject of the precise nature of "hypotheses" in the mathematical and the physical sciences.

<sup>1</sup> A professor of mathematics in Paris and an ardent Bergsonian, and along with Laberthonnière one of the prominent Catholic defenders of Pragmatism and Modernism, author of a book on *Dogmatism and Criticism* (*Dogme et Critique*). Not having had the time to examine this book, as somewhat removed from my immediate subject, I append for the benefit of the reader the following statements and quotations from the useful book *Faith and its Psychology*, by Professor Inge of Cambridge. It is easy to see that the positions represented therein would give rise to controversy as to the historicity or fact of Christianity. "Le Roy gives us some examples of this Catholic Pragmatism. When we say 'God is personal,' we mean 'behave in our relations with God as you do in your relations with a human person.' When we say, 'Jesus is risen from the dead,' we mean 'treat him as if he were your contemporary.' . . . His main theses may be summed up in his own words. 'The current intellectualist conception renders insoluble most of the objections which are now raised against the idea of dogma. A doctrine of the primacy of action, on the contrary, permits us to solve the problem without abandoning anything of the rights of thought or of the exigencies of dogma.'" Le Roy, by the way, has published a book upon the philosophy of Bergson, which is said to be the best book upon the subject. It has been translated into English.

<sup>2</sup> M. Abel Rey, author of a work on the *Theory of Physical Science in the hands of Contemporary Scientists* (*La Théorie de la physique chez les physiciens contemporains*). In this book (I have not had the time to examine it carefully) M. Rey examines the theories and methods of Newton, and also of modern thinkers like Mach and Ostwald, reaching the conclusion that the philosophy with which physical science is most compatible is a "modified form of Positivism," which bears a striking resemblance to "Pragmatism" and the "philosophy of experience." The English reader will find many useful references to Rey in the pages of Father Leslie J. Walker's *Theories of Knowledge*, in the "Stoneyhurst Philosophical Series."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

definitely bears the name of Pragmatism, that of M. Blondel,<sup>1</sup> who in 1893 wrote a suggestive work entitled *L'Action*, and who claims to have coined the word Pragmatism, after much careful consideration and discrimination, as early as 1888—many years before the California pamphlet of James.

The first of these points of correspondence or relationship we can pass over with the remark that we shall have a good deal to say about the advantage enjoyed by Pragmatism over Rationalism in the treatment of "freedom" and the "volitional" side of human nature, and also about the general pragmatist reaction against Rationalism.

And as for the philosophy of science, it has been shown that our English-speaking pragmatists cannot exactly pride themselves in the somewhat indiscriminate manner of James and Schiller upon the supposed support for their "hypothetical" conception of science and philosophy to be found in the work of their French associates upon the logic of science. "The men of great learning who were named as sponsors of this new philosophy have more and more testified what reservations they make, and how greatly their conclusions differ from those which are currently attributed to them."<sup>2</sup> Both Brunschvicg and Poincaré, in fact, take the greatest pains in

<sup>1</sup> It was impossible to procure a copy of this work of M. Blondel. I have tried to do so twice in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> M. Lalande in the *Philosophical Review* (1906), p. 246.



their books to dissociate themselves from anything like the appearance of an acceptance of the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge, from the signs of any lack of faith in the idea that science, as far as it goes, gives us a true revelation of the nature of reality.

Then in regard to (3) the French pragmatist philosophy or religion we have only to read the reports and the quotations of M. Lalande to see in this philosophy the operation of an uncritical dogmatism or a blind "fideism" to which very few other philosophers, either in France or in any other country, would care to subscribe. "*La Revue de Philosophie*, which is directed by ecclesiastics, recently extolled pragmatism as a means of proving orthodox beliefs." . . . "This system solves a great many difficulties in philosophy; it explains the necessity of principles marvellously." . . . "The existence of God, Providence and Immortality are demonstrated by their happy effects upon our terrestrial life." . . . "If we can consider the matter carefully, it will be seen that the Good is the useful; for not to be good in anything is synonymous with being bad, and everywhere the true is the useful. It is in this assertion that Pragmatism consists."<sup>1</sup>

And as to the fourth tendency, there is, at its outset, according to M. Lalande, a more rational or ethical basis for the fideism of M. Blondel's book upon action, which starts off with a criticism

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 245-246.

of philosophic dilettantism quite analogous with that which Mr. Peirce follows in *How to Make Our Ideas Clear*. But M. Blondel "does not continue in the same manner, and his conclusion is very different. Rejecting all philosophical formalism, *he puts his trust in moral experience, and consults it directly*. He thinks that moral experience shows that action is not wholly self-contained, but that it *presupposes a reality which transcends the world in which we participate*."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, maintains M. Blondel, "we are *unable*, as Pascal already said, *either to live, or to understand ourselves, by ourselves alone*. So that, unless we mutilate our nature by renouncing all earnestness of life, we are necessarily led to recognize in ourselves the presence of God. Our problem, therefore, can only be solved by an act of absolute faith in a positive religion [Catholicism in his case]. This completes the series of acts of faith, without which no action, not even our daily acts, could be accomplished, and without which we should fall into absolute barrenness, both practical and intellectual."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am inclined to attach a great importance to this idea (Kant obviously had it) of "consulting moral experience directly," provided only that the "moral" in our experience is not too rigidly separated from the intellectual. And it would so far, therefore, be only to the credit of Pragmatism if we could associate it with a rational effort to do justice to our moral experience, as indeed possibly presupposing a "reality" that transcends the limits of our mere individuality, a reality that transcends, too, the subjective idealism that figures but too prominently in modern philosophy. See my eighth chapter, p. 223, where I criticize Dr. Bosanquet for not consulting moral experience directly.

<sup>2</sup> *Phil. Rev.*, 1906, p. 243.

Now again these words about our being unable to understand ourselves "by ourselves alone" contain an element of truth which we may associate with the pragmatist tendency to believe in a socialized (as distinguished from an individualistic) interpretation<sup>1</sup> of our common moral life, to believe, that is to say, in a society of persons as the truth (or the reality) of the universe, rather than in an interpretation of the universe as the thinking experience of a single absolute intelligence. This, however, is also a point which we are obliged to defer<sup>2</sup> until we take up the general subject of the relations between Pragmatism and Rationalism. The other words of the paragraph, in respect of our absolute need of faith in some positive religion, are, of course, expressive again of the uncritical fideism to which reference has already been made. As an offset or alternative to the "free" religion of Papini and James and to the experimental or practical religion of different Protestant bodies, it is enough of itself to give us pause in estimating the real drift<sup>3</sup> of Pragmatism in regard to religious faith and the philosophy of religion.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 200 *et. ff.*

<sup>3</sup> See p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> For a later statement upon the philosophy of religion in France see a report for the *Phil. Rev.* (vol. xvi. p. 304), by Le Roy. This whole matter is, of course, a subject in itself of the greatest theoretical and practical importance. It is enough for our purpose to have indicated the different ways in which Pragmatism and the "Will-to-Believe" philosophy have been received in France, and the different issues raised by this reception. The reader who would care to look at a constructive, philosophical view (by the *doyen* of French philosophy

We shall meantime take leave of French Pragmatism<sup>1</sup> with the reflection that it is thus obviously as complex and as confusing and confused a thing as is the Pragmatism of other countries. It is now almost a generation since

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professors) of the whole issue between the pragmatist or "voluntarist" point of view in religion and the older "intellectual" view, cannot do better than consult *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, by E. Boutroux, a book that is apparently studied everywhere at present in France. Its spirit and substance may be indicated by the following quotations, which follow after some pages in which M. Boutroux exposes the error of "the radical distinction between theory and practice." "The starting point of science is an abstraction, i.e. an element extracted from the given fact and considered separately. We cannot expect man to be satisfied with the abstract when the concrete is at his disposal. That would be 'something like offering a printed bill of fare as the equivalent for a solid meal.' *Man uses science but he lives religion.* The part cannot replace the whole; the symbol cannot suppress reality." . . . "Not only is science unable to replace religion, but she cannot dispense with the subjective reality upon which the latter is grounded. It is pure Scholastic realism to imagine that the objective and the impersonal suffice apart from the subjective in our experience. Between the subjective and the objective no demarcation is given which justifies from the philosophical standpoint the divisions which science imagines for her own convenience" (p. 329).

<sup>1</sup> Since writing these words, I have made (thanks firstly to Dr. Schiller's review in *Mind*, July 1911) the acquaintance of the important work of M. Pradines upon the *Conditions of Action*. In the central conception of this work, that action is "all-including" and that all knowledge is a form of action, I find an important development of much that the pragmatists have long been endeavouring to express, and also in particular a development of the celebrated action philosophy of M. Blondel. I am inclined, with Dr. Schiller, to regard the volumes of M. Pradines as apparently the high-water mark of French pragmatist philosophy in the general sense of the term, although I cannot but at the same time hail with approval their occasional sharp criticism of Pragmatism as to some extent "scepticism and irrationalism." I am inclined to think, too, that the ethical philosophy of M. Pradines has some of the same defects that I shall venture to discuss later in dealing with the application (mainly by Dewey) of Pragmatism to moral theory. Of course his *Conditions of Action* is by no means as original a production as Blondel's book upon *Action*.

we began to hear of a renaissance of spiritualism<sup>1</sup> and idealism in France in connexion not merely with the work of philosophers like Renouvier and Lachelier and Fouillée<sup>2</sup> and Boutroux, but with men of letters like De Vogué, Lavissee, Faguet, Desjardins<sup>3</sup> and the rest, and some of the French Pragmatism of to-day is but one of the more specialized phases of the broader movement.

<sup>1</sup> Fouillée speaks in his book upon the *Idealist Movement and the Reaction against Positive Science* of the year 1851, as the time of the triumph of "force," of "Naturalism" (Zola, Goncourt, etc.), and of the revival of Idealism by Lachelier, Renouvier, and Boutroux.

<sup>2</sup> See the celebrated work of A. Fouillée, *La Psychologie des idées-forces* (Paris, 1890). I confess to having been greatly impressed by this book when I first made its acquaintance. In particular, I can think of an idea in Fouillée's book that anticipates even Bergson, namely the fact that every idea or sensation is an effort that is furthered or impeded. But Fouillée works out in this book the active of the volitional side of nearly every mental power and of the mental life itself, refusing to separate "mind" and "bodily activity." It really anticipates a great deal of the whole French philosophy and psychology of action, including the work of Blondel and Bergson.

<sup>3</sup> M. Paul Desjardins (at present a professor of "letters" at Sévres) was influential in Paris about 1892-93 as the founder of a *Union pour l'Action morale*, which published a monthly bulletin. This society still exists, but under the name (and the change is indeed highly significant of what Pragmatism in general really needs) *L'Union pour la vérité morale et sociale*. I append a few words from one of the bulletins I received from M. Desjardins. They are indicative of the spiritualizations of thought and action for which the old society stood. "Il ne s'agit de rien moins que de renverser entièrement l'échelle de nos jugements, de nos attaches, de mettre en haut ce qui était en bas, et en bas ce qui était en haut. Il s'agit d'une conversion totale, en somme. . . ." "La règle commune c'est la médiocrité d'âme, ou même ce qu'on pourrait appeler *l'athéisme pratique*. En effet, Dieu étant, par rapport à notre conscience, la Volonté que le bien se réalise, ou la Règle vivante, on devient pratiquement, athée, fût-on d'ailleurs très persuadé par les preuves philosophiques de l'existence de Dieu, lorsqu'on perd la notion de cette Volonté immuable avec laquelle la nôtre se confond activement *dès qu'elle mérite le nom de volonté libre*, etc." In this last sentence there is a distinctly pragmatist note in the sense of the action philosophy of Blondel and Bergson and the rest.



And as for the special question of the influence of James and his philosophy upon Bergson, and of that of the possible return influence of Bergson upon James,<sup>1</sup> the evidence produced by Lalande from Bergson himself is certainly all to the effect that both men have worked very largely independently of each other, although perfectly cognisant now and then of each other's publications. Both men, along with their followers (and this is all that needs interest us), have obviously been under the influence of ideas that have long been in the air about the need of a philosophy that is "more truly empirical"<sup>2</sup> than the traditional philosophy, and more truly inclined to "discover what is involved in our actions in the ultimate recess, when, unconsciously and in spite of ourselves, we *support existence and cling to it whether we completely understand it or not.*"<sup>3</sup>

As for Pragmatism and pragmatist achievements in Germany, there is, as might well be supposed, little need of saying much. The genius of the country is against both; and if there is any Pragmatism in Germany, it must have contrived somehow to have been "born again" of the

<sup>1</sup> See also the recent book by Flournoy on the *Philosophy of James* (Paris, 1911), in which this interesting special subject is discussed as well as the important difference between James and Bergson.

<sup>2</sup> Rey in his *Philosophie Moderne*, 1908, speaks of the "gleaning of the practical factors of rationalistic systems" as the "new line" in French philosophy (*Journ. of Phil.*, 1911, p. 226).

<sup>3</sup> From the Lalande article already mentioned.



"spirit" before obtaining official recognition.<sup>1</sup> So much even might be inferred from the otherwise generous recognition accorded to the work of James by scholars and thinkers like Eucken and Stein<sup>2</sup> and the rest. Those men cannot

<sup>1</sup> This can be seen, for example, in the Preface to *Die Philosophie des Als Ob*, the quasi-Pragmatist book recently edited by Vaihinger, the famous commentator on Kant. "We must distinguish in Pragmatism," it is there stated, "what is valuable from the uncritical exaggerations. Uncritical Pragmatism is an epistemological Utilitarianism of the worst sort; what helps us to make life tolerable is true, etc. . . . Thus Philosophy becomes again an *ancilla theologiae*; nay, the state of matters is even worse than this; it becomes a *meretrix theologorum*." This, by the way, is a strange and a striking book, and is perhaps the last conspicuous instance from Germany of the vitality, and of the depths of the roots of some of the principles of the pragmatists. The very appearance of the name of Vaihinger in connexion with it (as the editor) must be a considerable shock to rationalists and to Kantians, who have long looked upon Vaihinger as one of the authoritative names in German Transcendentalism. Here, however, he seems to agree with those who treat Kant's ethical philosophy of postulates as the real Kant, making him out, further, as the author of a far-reaching philosophy of the "hypotheses" and the "fictions" that we must use in the interpretation of the universe. With Dr. Schiller, who reviews this work in *Mind* (1912), I am inclined to think that it travels too far in the direction of an entirely hypothetical conception of knowledge, out-pragmatizing the pragmatists apparently. The student who reads German will find it a veritable magazine of information about nearly all the thinkers of the time who have pragmatist or quasi-pragmatist leanings. All the names, for example, of the German and French writers to whom I refer in this second chapter are mentioned there [I had, of course, written my book before I saw Vaihinger], along with many others. It is as serious an arraignment of abstract rationalism as is to be found in contemporary literature, and edited, as I say, by the Nestor of the Kant students of our time.

<sup>2</sup> Especially in the open-minded and learned articles in the *Archiv für Philosophie*, 1907, Band xiv., Professor Stein (of Bern) is known as one of the most enthusiastic and voluminous writers upon Social Philosophy in Germany. His best-known work is an encyclopedic book upon the social question in the light of philosophy (*Die soziale Frage im Lichte der Philosophie*, 1903). His tendency here is realistic and naturalistic and evolutionistic, and he thinks (for a philosopher) far too much of men like Herbert Spencer and Mach and Ostwald.

see Pragmatism save in the broad light of the "humanism" that has always characterised philosophy, when properly appreciated, and understood in the light of its true genesis. Pragmatism has in fact been long known in Germany under the older names of "Voluntarism" and "Humanism," although it may doubtless be associated there with some of the more pronounced tendencies of the hour, such as the recent insistence of the "Göttingen Fries School" upon the importance of the "genetic" and the "descriptive" point of view in regard even to the matter of the supposed first principles of knowledge, the hypothetical and methodological conception of philosophy taken by philosophical scientists like Mach and Ostwald<sup>1</sup> and their followers, the

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What one misses in Stein is a discussion of the social question in relation to some of the deeper problems of philosophy, such as we find in men of our own country like Mackenzie and Bosanquet, and Ritchie, and Jones, and others. His work, however (it has been translated into Russian and French), is a complete literary presentation of the subject, and a valuable source of information. See my review notices of it in the *Phil. Rev.* vol. xiv.

<sup>1</sup> Mach and Ostwald both represent (for the purposes of our study) the association that undoubtedly exists between Pragmatism and the tendency of all the physical and natural sciences to form "hypotheses" or conceptions, that are to them the best means of "describing" or "explaining" (for any purpose) either facts, or the connexions between facts. Mach (professor of the history and theory of the sciences in Vienna) is a "phenomenalist" and "methodologist" who attacks all *a priorism*, treating the matter of the arrangement of the "material" of a science under the idea of the "most economic expenditure" of our "mental energy." One of the best known of his books is his *Analysis of the Sensations* (translated, along with his *Popular Science Lectures*, in the "Open Court Library" of Chicago). In this work he carries out the idea of his theory of knowledge as a question of the proper relation of "facts" to "symbols." "Thing, body, matter," he says (p. 6), "are all nothing apart from their so-called attributes." "Man possesses

"empiricism" and "realism" of thinkers like the late Dr. Avenarius<sup>1</sup> of Zurich.

in its highest form the power of consciously and arbitrarily determining his point of view." In his *Introduction*, he attempts to show how "the ego and the relation of bodies to the ego give rise" to "problems" in the relations simply of "certain complexes" of "sensation to each other." While it is undoubtedly to the credit of Mach that he sees the "subjective," or the "mental," factor in facts and things and objects, it must be said that he ignores altogether the philosophical problems of the ego, or the "self," as something more than a mere object among objects.

Ostwald is one of the founders of the theory of "Energetics," the theory of the school that believes in substituting a dynamical philosophy, for the older, atomic, or mechanical philosophy of matter and motion. He put this philosophy forward in 1895 as the last gift of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. He suggests how this idea of energetics may be applied also to psychical processes, in so far as these may be understood by conceptions that have proved to be useful in our interpretation of the physical world. Our "consciousness would thus come to be looked upon as a property of a peculiar kind of energy of the nerves." The whole idea is a piece of phenomenalist positivism, and although Ostwald makes an attempt (somewhat in the manner of Herbert Spencer) to explain the "forms," or the categories, of experience as simply "norms" or "rules" that have been handed on from one generation to another, he does not occupy himself with ultimate philosophical questions about the nature either of matter or of energy. His *Natural Philosophy* has recently been translated into English (Holt & Co., 1910). Its Pragmatism lies in the fact of his looking upon concepts and classification as "not questions" of the so-called "essence" of the thing, "but rather as pertaining to purely practical arrangements for an easier and more successful mastery of scientific problems" (p. 67). He also takes a pragmatist, or "functional," conception of the mental life towards the close of this book. Professor Ostwald lectured some years ago in the United States, and his lectures were attended by students of philosophy and students of science. Professor (now President) Hibben has written an interesting account of his theory in its philosophical bearings in the *Philosophical Review*, vol. xii.

<sup>1</sup> The philosophy of Avenarius (born in Paris, but died as Professor of Inductive Philosophy in Zurich) is called "Empirical Criticism," which differs from Idealism by taking a more realistic attitude to ordinary human experience. There is an excellent elementary account of Avenarius in *Mind* for 1897 by Carstanjen of Zurich. Avenarius goes back in some respects to the teaching of Comte as to the need of interpreting all philosophical theories in the terms of the social environment out of which they come.

Then the so-called "teleological," or "practical," character of our human thinking has also been recognized in modern German thought long before the days of Peirce and Dewey, even by such strictly academic thinkers as Lotze and Sigwart. The work of the latter thinker upon Logic, by the way, was translated into English under distinctly Neo-Hegelian influences. In the second portion of this work the universal presuppositions of knowledge are considered, not merely as *a priori* truths, but as akin in some important respects "to the ethical principles by which we are wont to determine and guide our free conscious activity."<sup>1</sup> But even apart from this matter of the natural association of Pragmatism with the Voluntarism that has long existed in German philosophy,<sup>2</sup> we may undoubtedly pass to the following things in contemporary and recent German thought as sympathetic, in the main, to the pragmatist tendencies of James and Dewey and Schiller: (1) the practical conception of science and philosophy, as both of them a kind of "economy of the attention," a sort of "conceptual shorthand"<sup>3</sup> (for the purposes of the

<sup>1</sup> *Logic*, vol. ii. p. 17. English translation by Miss Dendy. In this same section of his work, Lotze talks of the demands of our thought as "postulates" whose claims rest in the end upon our will—*auf unserm Wollen*.

<sup>2</sup> To be traced to Fichte's well-known initial interpretation of Kant from the standpoint of the Practical Reason of the second "Critique," and to Schelling's late "positive" philosophy, and to Schopenhauer, the will philosopher *par excellence*. See my *Schopenhauer's System in its Philosophical Significance*.

<sup>3</sup> As an illustration of this "conceptual shorthand," I take the

"description" of our environment) that we have referred to in the case of Mach and Ostwald; (2) the close association between the "metaphysical" and the "cultural" in books like those of Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> and Eleutheropulos;<sup>2</sup> (3) the sharp criticism of

following lines from Professor Needham's book upon *General Biology* (p. 222) in respect of "classification" and its relative and changing character. "Whatever our views of relationship, the series in which we arrange organisms are based upon the likenesses and differences we find to exist among them. This is classification. We associate organisms together under group names because, being so numerous and so diverse, it is only thus that our minds can deal with them. Classification furnishes the handles by which we move all our intellectual luggage. We base our groupings on what we know of the organisms. Our system of classification is therefore liable to change with every advance of knowledge."

<sup>1</sup> Professor Jerusalem (the translator of James's *Pragmatism* into German) is known as one of the German discoverers of Pragmatism. His *Introduction to Philosophy* (translated by Professor Sanders, Macmillan & Co., N.Y., 1910) is an admirable, easy, and instructive introduction to philosophy from a pragmatist point of view. It has gone through four editions in Germany. It is quite free from any taint of irrationalism and has sections upon the "theory of knowledge" and the "theory of being." Its spirit may be inferred from the following quotations. "My philosophy is characterized by the empirical view point, the genetic method, and the biological and the social methods of interpreting the human mind" (the Preface). "Philosophy is the intellectual effort which is undertaken with a view to combining the common experiences of life and the results of scientific investigation into a harmonious and consistent world theory; a world theory, moreover, which is adapted to satisfy the requirements of the understanding and the demands of the heart. There was a time when men believed that such a theory could be constructed from the pure forms of thought, without much concern for the results of detailed investigation. But that time is for ever past" (pp. 1 and 2).

<sup>2</sup> Author of a work on *Philosophy and Social Economy* (*Philosophie und Wirtschaft*), in which the fundamental idea is that philosophy is essentially nothing more or less than a "conception of life" or a view of the world in general, and that the older rationalistic philosophy will therefore have to be modified in view of modern discoveries and modern ways of looking at things. It has, of course, the limitations of such a point of view, in so far as its author seems to forget that philosophy must *lead* human life and not merely *follow* it. My present point is



the Rationalism of the Critical Idealism by the two last-mentioned thinkers, and by some of the members of the new Fichte<sup>1</sup> School like Schellwien; and last but not least, (4) the tendency to take a psychological<sup>2</sup> and a sociological<sup>3</sup> (instead of a merely logical) view of the functions of thought

merely to mention of the existence and work of this man as one of the continental thinkers who have anticipated the essentially social conception of philosophy taken by the pragmatists.

<sup>1</sup> It is easy to see the influence of Fichte's will philosophy and practical idealism in Schellwien's books (*Philosophie und Leben, Wille und Erkenntniss, Der Geist der neuern Philosophie*). He speaks of the primacy of the will (in point of time only, of course), or of the "unconscious" in the life of man, allowing, however, that man gradually transforms this natural life in the life of "creative activity" that is his proper life. He states (in the *Spirit of the New Philosophy*) the pragmatist idea that "belief" (p. 32) or the "feeling" that we have of the ultimate "unity" of "subject and object," precedes (also in point of "time") knowledge, pointing out, however, in the same place the limitations of belief. These latter, he supposes, to be overcome in the higher knowledge that we have in creative activity—an idea which, I think, may be associated to some extent with the position of Blondel.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Phil. Rev.* (xvi. p. 250) Dr. Ewald speaks of this work of this psychologizing school as existing alongside of the renewed interest in Fichte and Schelling and Hegel. It is an attempt to revive the teaching of Fries, a Kantian (at Jena) who attempted to establish the Critique of Pure Reason upon a psychological basis, believing that psychology, "based on internal experience," must form the basis of all philosophy. It stands squarely upon the fact that all logical laws and "categories," even the highest and most abstract, in order to "come to consciousness in man," must be given to him as "psychological processes"—a position which is certainly true as far as it goes, and which supports, say, the genetic psychological attitude of Professor Dewey. Its attitude has been sharply criticized in some of his books by Dr. Ernst Cassirer of Berlin, a well-known upholder of a more rationalistic form of Neo-Kantianism.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Simmel of Berlin (like Stein) is a prominent representative of this school (even in a recent striking book that he wrote upon the philosophy of Kant). He has written, for example, a most erudite work upon the *Philosophy of Money*, and this at the same time with all his university work as a fascinating and learned lecturer upon both ancient and modern philosophy.



and philosophy, that is just as accentuated in Germany at the present time as it is elsewhere.

James and Schiller have both been fond of referring to the work of many of these last-mentioned men as favourable to a conception of philosophy less as a "theory of knowledge" (or a "theory of being") in the old sense than as a *Weltanschauungslehre* (a view of the world as whole), a "discussion of the various possible programmes for man's life" to which reference has already been made in the case of Papini and others. And we might associate with their predilections and persuasions in this regard the apparent Pragmatism also of a great scholar like Harnack<sup>1</sup> in reference to the subordination of religious dogma to the realities of the religious life, or the Pragmatism of Ritschl<sup>2</sup> himself, in

<sup>1</sup> Without attempting to enter upon the matter of Harnack's philosophy as a Neo-Kantian of the school of Ritschl, I am thinking simply of things like the following from his book on the *Essence of Christianity*. "It is to man that religion pertains, to man, as one who in the midst of all change and progress himself never changes" (p. 8). "The point of view of the philosophical theorists in the strict sense of the word will find no place in these lectures. Had they been delivered sixty years ago it would have been our endeavour to try to arrive by speculative reasoning at some general conception of religion, and then to define the Christian religion accordingly. But we have rightly become sceptical about the value of this procedure. *Latet dolus in generalibus*. We know to-day that life cannot be spanned by general conceptions" (p. 9). See also his protest (on p. 220) against the substitution of a "Hellenistic" view of religion for religion itself—a protest that is, according to Pfeiderer in his *Development of Theology* (p. 298), a marked characteristic of Harnack's whole *History of Dogma*.

<sup>2</sup> I am thinking of Ritschl's sharp distinction between "theoretical knowledge" and "religious faith" (which rises to judgments of value about the world that transcend even moral values), and of his idea that the "truth" of faith is practical, and must be "lived." Pfeiderer says

regard to the subordinate place in living religion of mere intellectual theory, or even some of the tendencies of the celebrated value-philosophy of Rickert and Windelband<sup>1</sup> and Münsterberg<sup>2</sup> and the rest. But again the main trouble about all this quasi-German support for the pragmatists is that most of these contemporary thinkers have taken pains to trace the roots of their teaching back into the great systems of the

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(in his *Development of Theology*, p. 184) that Ritschl's "conception of religion is occupied with judgments of value [*Werturtheile*], i.e. with conceptions of our relation to the world which are of moment solely according to their value in awakening feelings of pleasure and pain, as our dominion over the world is furthered or checked." His "acceptance of the idea of God as [with Kant] a practical 'belief,' and not an act of speculative cognition," is also to some extent a pragmatist idea in the sense in which, in this book, I reject pragmatist ideas. Ritschl seems to have in the main only a strongly practical interest in dogmatics holding that "only the things vital are to be made vital in the actual service of the church." He goes the length of holding that "a merely philosophical view of the world has no place in Christian theology," holding that "metaphysical inquiry" applied to "nature" and to "spirit," as "things to be analysed, for the purpose of finding out what they are in themselves, can from the nature of the case have no great value for Christian theology." Of course he is right in holding that the "proofs for the existence of God, conducted by the purely metaphysical method, do not lead to the forces whose representation is given in Christianity, but merely to conceptions of a world-unity, which conceptions are neutral as regards all religion" (*The Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*, Swing. Longmans, Green & Co., 1901). I think this last quotation from Ritschl may be used as an expression of the idea of the pragmatists, that a true and complete philosophy must serve as a "dynamic" to human endeavour and to human motive.

<sup>1</sup> See the reference to Windelband in the footnote upon p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> I am thinking of Münsterberg's contention in his *Grundzüge* and his other books, that the life of actual persons can never be adequately described by the objective sciences, by psycho-physics, and so on, and of his apparent acceptance of the distinction of Rickert between the "descriptive" and the "normative" sciences (logic, ethics, aesthetics, and so on).

past. The pragmatists, on the other hand, have been notoriously careless about the matter of the various affiliations of their "corridor-like" and eclectic theory.

There are many reasons, however, against regarding even the philosophical expression of many of the practical and scientific tendencies of Germany as at all favourable to the acceptance of Pragmatism as a satisfactory philosophy from the German point of view. Among these reasons are : (1) The fact that it is naturally impossible to find any real support in past or present German philosophy for the impossible breach that exists in Pragmatism between the "theoretical" and the "practical," and (2) the fact that Germany has only recently passed through a period of sharp conflict between the psychological (or the "genetic") and the logical point of view regarding knowledge, resulting in a confessed victory for the latter. And then again (3) even if there is a partial correspondence between Pragmatism and the *quasi* economic (or "practical") conception taken of philosophy by some of the younger men in Germany who have not altogether outlived their reaction against Rationalism, there are other tendencies there that are far more characteristic of the spirit and of the traditions of the country. Among these are the New Idealism generally, the strong Neo-Kantian movement of the Marburg school<sup>1</sup> and their followers

<sup>1</sup> The leaders of this school are the two influential thinkers and teachers

in different places, the revived interest in Hegel<sup>1</sup> and in Schelling, the Neo-Romanticism of Jena, with its booklets upon such topics as *The Culture of the Soul*, *Life with Nature*, *German Idealism*, and so on.<sup>2</sup> And then (4) there are just as many difficulties in the way of regarding the psychological and sociological philosophy of men like Jerusalem and Eleutheropulos as anything like a final philosophy of knowledge, as there is in attempting to do the same thing with the merely preliminary and tentative philosophy of James and his associates.

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Cohen and Natorp, the former the author of a well-known book upon Kant's *Theory of Experience* (1871), formerly much used by English and American students, and the latter the author of an equally famous book upon Plato's *Theory of Ideas*, which makes an interesting attempt to connect Plato's "Ideas" with the modern notion of the law of a phenomenon. Cohen has given forth recently an important development of the Kantian philosophy in his two remarkable books upon the *Logic of Pure Knowledge* and the *Ethic of the Pure Will*. These works exercise a great influence upon the entire liberal (Protestant and Jewish) thought of the time in Germany. They teach a lofty spiritualism and idealism in the realm of ethics, which transcends altogether anything as yet attempted in this direction by Pragmatism.

<sup>1</sup> See the instructive reports to the *Philosophical Review* by Dr. Ewald of Vienna upon Contemporary Philosophy in Germany. In the 1907 volume he speaks of this renewed interest, "on a new basis," in the work of the great founders of transcendentalism as an "important movement partly within and partly outside of Neo-Kantianism," as "a movement heralded by some and derided by others as a reaction," as the "fulfilment of a prophecy by von Hartmann that after Kant we should have Fichte, and after Fichte, Schelling and Hegel." The renewed interest in Schelling, and with it the revival of an interest in university courses in the subject of the Philosophy of Nature (see the recent work of Driesch upon the *Science and Philosophy of the Organism*) is all part of the recent reaction in Germany against Positivism.

<sup>2</sup> We may associate, I suppose, the new German journal *Logos*, an international periodical for the "Philosophie der Kultur," with the same movement.

Returning now to America and England, although Pragmatism is eminently an American<sup>1</sup> doctrine, it would, of course, be absurd to imagine that Pragmatism has carried the entire thought of the United States with it.<sup>2</sup> It encountered there, even at the outset, at least something of the contempt and the incredulity and the hostility that it met with elsewhere, and also much of the American shrewd indifference to a much-advertised new article. The message of James as a philosopher, too, was doubtless discounted (at least by the well-informed) in the light of his previous brilliant work as a descriptive psychologist, and also, perhaps, in the light of his wonderfully suggestive personality.<sup>3</sup>

What actually happened in America in respect of the pragmatist movement was, first of all, the sudden emergence of a magazine literature<sup>4</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VII. upon "Pragmatism as Americanism."

<sup>2</sup> See an article in the *Critical Review* (edited by the late Professor Salmond, of Aberdeen), by the author upon "Recent Tendencies in American Philosophy." The year, I think, was either 1904 or 1905.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Without pretending to anything like a representative or an exhaustive statement in the case of this magazine literature, I may mention the following: Professor Perry of Harvard, in his valuable articles for the *Journal of Philosophy and Psychology*, 1907, vol. iv., upon "A Review of Pragmatism as a Philosophical Generalization," and a "Review of Pragmatism as a Theory of Knowledge"; Professor Armstrong in vol. v. of the same journal upon the "Evolution of Pragmatism"; and Professor Lovejoy in the 1908 vol. upon the "Thirteen Pragmatisms." These are but a few out of the many that might be mentioned. The reader who is interested in looking for more such must simply consult for himself the *Philosophical Review*, and *Mind*, and the *Journal of Philosophy and Psychology*, for some years after, say, 1903. There is a good list of such articles in a German Doctor Thesis by Professor MacEachran of the University of Alberta, entitled *Pragmatismus eine neue Richtung der Philosophie*,



connexion with the Will-to-Believe philosophy of James and the California address, and in connexion (according to the generous testimony of James) with Deweyism or "Instrumentalism." Much of this tiresome and hair-splitting magazine discussion of "ideas as instruments of thought," and of the "consequences" ("theoretical" or "practical" or what not) by which ideas were to be "tested," was pronounced by James, in 1906, to be largely crude and superficial. It had the indirect merit, however, of yielding one or two valuable estimates of the many inconsistencies in Pragmatism, and of the many different kinds of Pragmatism or instrumentalism that there seemed to be, and of the value of Pragmatism as a "theory of knowledge," and as a "philosophical generalization." The upshot of the whole preliminary discussion was (1) the discovery that, Pragmatism having arisen (as Dewey himself put it) out of a multitude of conflicting tendencies in regard to what we might call the "approach" to philosophy, would probably soon "dissolve itself" back again into some of the streams out of which it had arisen,<sup>1</sup> and (2) the discovery that all that this early "methodological" pragmatism amounted to was the harmless doctrine that the

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Leipzig, 1910. There is also a history of pragmatist articles in the 1907 (January) number of the *Revue des Sciences, Philosophiques et Théologiques*.

<sup>1</sup> That this has really taken place can be clearly seen, I think, if we inspect the official programmes of the Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association for the last year or two.



meaning of any conception expressed itself in the past or future conduct or experience of actual, or possible, sentient creatures.

We shall again take occasion <sup>1</sup> to refer to this comparative failure of Pragmatism to give any systematic or unified account of the consequences by which it would seek to test the truth of propositions. Its failure, however, in this connexion is a matter of secondary importance in comparison with the great lesson <sup>2</sup> to be drawn from its idea that there can be for man no objective truth about the universe, apart from the idea of its meaning <sup>3</sup> or significance to his experience and to his conscious activity.

What is now taking place in America in this second decade [*i.e.* in the years after 1908] of the pragmatist movement is apparently (1) the sharpest kind of official rationalist condemnation of Pragmatism as an imperfectly proved and a merely "subjective" and a highly unsystematic philosophy; (2) the appearance of a number of instructive booklets <sup>4</sup> upon Pragmatism and the pragmatist movement, some of them expository and critical, some of them in the main sympathetic, some of them condemnatory and even contemptuous, and some of them attempts at further

<sup>1</sup> P. 144.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter VI., p. 149, upon the doctrine and the fact of "Meaning."

<sup>4</sup> Professor Pratt, *What is Pragmatism?* (Macmillan & Co., 1909); H. H. Bawden, *The Principles of Pragmatism, a Philosophical Interpretation of Experience*, Boston, 1910 (a useful book presenting what may be called a "phenomenological" account of Pragmatism); Moore, *Pragmatism and Its Critics*.

constructive work along pragmatist lines; (3) indications here and there of the acceptance and the promulgation of older and newer doctrines antithetic and hostile to Pragmatism—some of them possibly as typically American as Pragmatism itself.

As a single illustration of the partly constructive work that is being attempted in the name and the spirit of pragmatism, we may instance the line of reflection entered upon by Professor Moore<sup>1</sup> in consequence of his claim that to Pragmatism the fundamental thing in any judgment or proposition is not so much its consequences, but its "value." This claim may, no doubt, be supported by the many declarations of James and Schiller that the "true," like the "good" and the "beautiful," is simply a "valuation," and not the fetish that the rationalists make it out to be. It is doubtful, however, as we may try to indicate, whether this "value" interpretation of Pragmatism can be carried out independently of the more systematic attempts at a general philosophy of value that are being made to-day in Germany and America and elsewhere. And then it would be a matter of no ordinary difficulty to clear up the inconsistency that doubtless exists between Pragmatism as a value philosophy and Pragmatism as a mere philosophy of "consequences." It is "immediate," and "verifiable," and "definitely appreciated" consequences, rather than the higher values

<sup>1</sup> In *Pragmatism and Its Critics* (Univ. of Chicago Press).

of our experience that (up to the present time) seem to have bulked largely in the argumentations of the pragmatists.

And as an illustration of a doctrine that is both American and hostile to pragmatism, we may instance the New Realism<sup>1</sup> that was recently launched in a collective manifesto in *The Journal of Philosophy and Scientific Methods*. This realism is, to be sure, hostile to every form of "subjectivism" or personalism, and may in a certain sense be regarded as the emergence into full daylight of the realism or dualism that we found to be lurking<sup>2</sup> in James's "radical empiri-

<sup>1</sup> The manifesto has now become a book, *The New Realism* (Macmillan). For a useful account of the New Realism and the Old see Professor Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, Part V.

<sup>2</sup> The following are my reasons for saying that the "New Realism" was already to some extent lurking in the "radical empiricism" of James. (1) Although teaching unmistakably the "activity" of mind, James seemed to think this activity "selective" rather than "creative" (falling in this idea behind his much-admired Bergson). (2) Despite this belief in the activity of the mind, he had the way of regarding consciousness as (to some extent) the mind's "content"—an attitude common to all empirical psychologists since Hume and the English associationists. And from this position (legitimate so far from the psychological point of view) he went on to the idea (expressed in a troublesome form in the article, "Does Consciousness exist?") that consciousness is *not an entity or substance*—of course it is not in the ordinary sense of "entity." (3) Then from this he seemed to develop the idea that the various "elements" that enter into consciousness to be transformed into various "relationships" do not suffer any substantial change in this quasi-subjective "activity." Therefore, as Professor Perry puts it (*Present Tendencies*, p. 353), "the elements or terms which enter into consciousness and become its content may now be regarded as *the same elements which, in so far as otherwise related, compose physical nature* [*italics mine*]. The elements themselves, the '*materia prima*,' or stuff of pure experience, are neither psychical nor physical." It is in this last absurd sentence [simply a piece of quasi-scientific analysis, the error of which Critical Idealism would expose

cism." It is, therefore, as it were, one of the signs that Pragmatism is perhaps breaking up in America into some of the more elemental tendencies out of which it developed—in this case the American desire for operative (or effective) realism and for a "direct"<sup>1</sup> contact with reality instead of the indirect contact of so many metaphysical systems.

It is only necessary to add here that it is to the credit of American rationalism of the Neo-Hegelian type that it has shown itself, notably in the writings of Professor Royce,<sup>2</sup> capable, not only of criticising Pragmatism, but of seeking to incorporate, in a constructive philosophy of the present, some of the features of the pragmatist emphasis upon "will" and "achievement" and "purpose." It is, therefore, in this respect at least in line with some of the best tendencies in contemporary European philosophy.

Lastly, there are certain tendencies of recent English philosophy with which Pragmatism has special affinities. Among these may be mentioned: (1) the various general and specific

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in a moment] that the roots, I think, of "new realism" are to be found—a doctrine whose unmitigated externalism is the negation of all philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 164 and p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> I refer to his Aberdeen "Gifford Lectures" on "The World and The Individual," and to a well-known address of his upon "The Eternal and the Practical" in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association*. In this latter pamphlet he shows that Pragmatism and the philosophy of Consequences are impossible without "the Eternal" and without Idealism.

criticisms<sup>1</sup> that have been made there for at least two generations on the more or less formal and abstract character of the metaphysic of our Neo-Kantians and our Neo-Hegelians; (2) the concessions that have recently been made by prominent rationalists to the undoubtedly purposive, or "teleological," character of our human thinking, and to the connexion of our mental life with our entire practical and spiritual activity. Many of these concessions are now regarded as the merest commonplaces of speculation, and we shall probably refer to them in our next chapter. Then there is (3) the well-known insistence of some of our foremost psychologists, like Ward and Stout,<sup>2</sup> upon the reality of activity and "purpose" in mental process, and upon the part played by them in the evolution of our intellectual life, and of our adjustment to the world in which we find ourselves. And (4) the ethical and social ideal-

<sup>1</sup> The criticisms of which I am thinking are (to select but a few from memory) Green's well-known admission in respect of Hegelianism, that it would have "to be done all over again"; Mr. Bradley's admission that he is "not a Hegelian" and (recently) that he has "seen too much of metaphysics" to place any serious weight upon its reasonings; Jowett's complaint (in the "life" by Campbell) that the Oxford Hegelianism of his day was teaching students to place an undue reliance upon "words" and "concepts" in the place of facts and things; Dr. Bosanquet's admission (many years ago) that, of course, "gods and men" were more than "bloodless categories"; Professor Pringle Pattison's criticism of Hegel in his *Hegelianism and Personality*; Professor Baillie's criticisms at the end of his *Logic of Hegel*; Mr. Sturt's criticism of Neo-Hegelianism in his *Idola Theatri*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See the following, for example, from Professor Stout: "Every agreeable or disagreeable sensation has a conative or quasi-conative aspect" (*Manual of Psychology*, p. 233). Also: "Perception is never merely cognitive" (*ibid.* p. 242); it has a "conative character and a feeling tone," etc.

ism of such well-known members of our Neo-Hegelian school as Professors Jones, Mackenzie, and Muirhead. These scholars and thinkers are just as insistent as the pragmatists upon the idea that philosophy and thought are, and should be, a practical social "dynamic"—that is to say, "forces" and "motives" making for the perfection of the common life. (5) A great deal of the philosophy of science and of the philosophy of axioms and postulates to be found in British writers, from Mill and Jevons to Karl Pearson and Mr. A. Sidgwick<sup>1</sup> and many others.

Apart from all this, however, or rather, in addition to it, it may be truly said that one of the striking things about recent British philosophical literature<sup>2</sup> is the stir and the activity that have been excited in the rationalist camp by the writings of the pragmatists and the "personal idealists," and by the critics of these newer modes of thought. All this has led to many such re-statements of the problems of philosophy as are to be found in the books of men like Joachim,<sup>3</sup> Henry Jones,<sup>4</sup> A. E.

<sup>1</sup> A. Sidgwick's "Applied Axioms" (*Mind*, N.S. xiv. p. 42). This is extremely useful, connecting the recent pragmatist movement with the work of the English logicians. See in the same connexion the articles of Captain Knox in the *Quarterly Review* (April 1909) on "Pragmatism."

<sup>2</sup> During the last ten years *Mind* has contained articles on the pragmatist controversy by nearly all our prominent academic authorities: Dr. Bradley, Dr. McTaggart, Professor Taylor, Professor Hoernle, Dr. Schiller, Dr. Mellone, Dr. Boyce-Gibson, Mr. Hobhouse, and so on.

<sup>3</sup> Particularly in his valuable book on *Truth* in which the weakness of the Hegelian conception of truth is set forth along with that of other views.

<sup>4</sup> In *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, in his *Browning as a Religious and Philosophical Teacher*, and elsewhere.



Taylor,<sup>1</sup> Boyce-Gibson,<sup>2</sup> Henry H. Sturt,<sup>3</sup> S. H. Mellone,<sup>4</sup> J. H. B. Joseph,<sup>5</sup> and others, and even, say, in such a representative book as that of Professor Stewart upon the classical theme of Plato's *Theory of Ideas*. In this work an attempt is made to interpret Plato's "Ideas" in the light of pragmatist considerations as but "categories" or "points of view" which we find it convenient to use in dealing with our sense experience.

<sup>1</sup> In his *Elements of Metaphysic*, and in many of his recent reviews; in his review, for example, of Professor Bosanquet's *Individuality and Value*, in the *Review of Theology and Philosophy*, and in his *Mind* (July 1912) review of Professor Ward's *Realm of Ends*.

<sup>2</sup> In his book upon the *Philosophy of Eucken*, in *God With Us*, and elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> In *Idola Theatri* (an important criticism of Neo-Hegelian writers), and elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> In *Essays in Philosophical Construction*, and in his book upon *Logic*.

<sup>5</sup> In his *Introduction to Logic*.

## CHAPTER III

### SOME FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

WE shall now attempt a somewhat detailed treatment of a few of the more characteristic tendencies of Pragmatism. The following have already been mentioned in our general sketch of its development and of the appearance of the pragmatist philosophy in Europe and America: (1) the attempted modification by Pragmatism of the extremes of Rationalism, and its dissatisfaction with the rationalism of both science and philosophy; (2) its progress from the stage of a mere practical and experimental theory of truth to a broad humanism in which philosophy itself becomes (like art, say) merely an important "dynamic" element in human culture; (3) its preference in the matter of first principles for "faith" and "experience" and a trust in our instinctive "beliefs"; (4) its readiness to affiliate with the various liberal and humanistic philosophies in human thought, such as the philosophy of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and the Hegelianism of the *Philosophical Times*.<sup>a</sup> In *Idealism*,<sup>b</sup> "freedom," and the "hypothetical

<sup>a</sup> Part of the *Philosophical Times* in human thought, such as the philosophy of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and the Hegelianism of the *Philosophical Times*.

<sup>b</sup> In *Idealism*, "freedom," and the "hypothetical

idealism, the religious reaction of recent years, the voluntaristic trend in German post-Kantian philosophy, and so on. Our subject in this chapter, however, is rather that of the three or four more or less characteristic assumptions and contentions upon which all these and the many other pragmatist tendencies may be said to rest.

The first and foremost of these assumptions is the position that all truth is "made" truth, "human" truth, truth related to human attitudes and purposes, and that there is no "objective" or "independent" truth, no truth "in whose establishment the function of giving human satisfaction, in marrying previous parts of experience with newer parts, has played no rôle." Truths were "nothing," as it were, before they were "discovered," and the most ancient truths were once "plastic," or merely susceptible of proof or disproof. Truth is "made" just like "health," or "wealth," or "value," and so on. Insistence, we might say, upon this one note, along with the entire line of reflection that it awakens in him, is really, as Dewey reminds us, the main burden of James's book upon *Pragmatism*. Equally characteristic is it too of Dewey himself who is for ever reverting to his doctrine of the factitious character of truth. There is no "fixed distinction," he tells us, "between the empirical values of the unreflective life and the most abstract process of rational thought." And to Schiller, again, this same thought is the beginning of everything in

philosophy, for with an outspoken acceptance of this doctrine of the "formation" of all truth, Pragmatism, he thinks, can do at least two things that Rationalism is for ever debarred from doing: (1) distinguish adequately "truth" from "fact," and (2) distinguish adequately truth from error. Whether these two things be, or be not, the consequences of the doctrine in question [and we shall return<sup>1</sup> to the point] we may perhaps accept it as, on the whole, harmonious with the teaching of psychology about the nature of our ideas as mental habits, or about thinking as a restrained, or a guided, activity. It is in harmony, too, with the palpable truism that all "truth" must be truth that some beings or other who have once "sought" truth (for some reasons or other) have at last come to regard as satisfying their search and their purposes. And this truism, it would seem, must remain such in spite of, or even along with, any meaning that there may be in the idea of what we call "God's truth." By this expression men understand, it would seem, merely God's knowledge of truths or facts of which we as men may happen to be ignorant. But then there can have been no time in which God can be imagined to have been ignorant of these or any other matters. It is therefore not for Him truth as opposed to falsehood.

And then, again, this pragmatist position about all truth being "made" truth would seem to be

<sup>1</sup> See p. 154.

valid in view of the difficulty (Plato<sup>1</sup> spoke of it) of reconciling God's supposed absolute knowledge of reality with our finite and limited apprehension of the same.<sup>2</sup>

The main interest, however, of pragmatists in their somewhat tiresome insistence upon the truism that all truth is made truth is their hostility (Locke had it in his day) to the supposed rationalist position that there is an "*a priori*" and "objective" truth independent altogether of human activities and human purposes.<sup>3</sup> The particular

<sup>1</sup> "If God has this perfect authority and perfect knowledge, His authority cannot rule us, nor His knowledge know us, or any human thing; just as our authority does not extend to the gods, nor our knowledge know anything which is divine; so by parity of reason they, being gods, are not our masters, neither do they know the things of men" (*Parmenides*, 134, Jowett's *Plato*, vol. iv.).

<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, a very old difficulty, involved in the problem of the supposed pre-knowledge of God. Bradley deals with it in the *Mind* (July 1911) article upon "Some Aspects of Truth." His solution (as Professor Dawes Hicks notices in the *Hibbert Journal*, January 1912) is the familiar Neo-Hegelian finding, that as a "particular judgment" with a "unique context" my truth is "new," but "as an element in an eternal reality" it was "waiting for me." Readers of Green's *Prolegomena* are quite ready for this finding. Pragmatists, of course, while insisting on the man-made character of truth, have not as yet come in sight of the difficulties of the divine foreknowledge—in relation to the free purposes and the free discoveries of mortals.

<sup>3</sup> There is, it seems to me, a suggestion of this rationalist position in the fact, for example, that Mr. Bertrand Russell begins his recent booklet upon *The Problems of Philosophy* with the following inquiry about knowledge: "Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it?" I mean that the initial and paramount importance attached here to this question conveys the impression that the supreme reality for philosophy is still some independently certain piece of knowledge. I prefer, with the pragmatists and the humanists, to think of knowledge as concerned with the purposes of persons as intelligent beings, or with the realities revealed in the knowing process. Although there are passages in his book that show Mr. Russell to be aware of the selves and the psychical elements and processes that enter into knowing, they do not affect his

object of their aversion is what Dewey<sup>1</sup> talks of as "that dishonesty, that insincerity, characteristic of philosophical discussion, that is manifested in speaking and writing as if certain ultimate abstractions or concepts could be more real than human purposes and human beings, and as if there could be any contradiction between truth and purpose." As we shall reflect at a later stage<sup>2</sup> upon the rationalist theory of truth, we may, meantime, pass over this hostility with the remark that it is, after all, only owing to certain peculiar circumstances (those, say, of its conflict with religion and science and custom) in the development of philosophy that its first principles have been regarded by its votaries as the most real of all realities. These devotees tend to forget in their zeal that the pragmatist way of looking upon all supposed first principles—that of the consideration of their utility in and necessity as explanations of our common experience and its realities—is the only way of explaining their reality, even as conceptions.

It requires to be added—so much may, indeed, have already been inferred from the preceding chapter—that, apart from their hint about the

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prevailing rationalistic and impersonal conception of knowledge and philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> In his sympathetic and characteristic review of James's "Pragmatism" in the *Journ. of Philos.*, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 203 (the note), and p. 263, where I suggest that no philosophy can exist, or can possibly begin, without some direct contact with reality, without the experience of some person or persons, without assumptions of one kind or another.



highest truth being necessarily inclusive of the highest human purposes, it is by no means easy to find out from the pragmatists what they mean by truth, or how they would define it. When the matter is pressed home, they generally confess that their attitude is in the main "psychological" rather than philosophical, that it is the "making" of truth rather than its "nature" or its "contents" or its systematic character that interests them. It is the "dynamical" point of view, as they put it, that is essential to them. And out of the sphere and the associations of this contention they do not really travel. They will tell you what it means to hit upon this particular way of looking upon truth, and how stimulating it is to attempt to do so. And they will give you many more or less artificial and tentative, external, descriptions of their philosophy by saying that ideas are "made for man," and "not man for ideas," and so on. But, although they deny both the common-sense view that truth is a "correspondence" with external reality, and the rationalist view that truth is a "coherent system" on its own account, they never define truth any more than do their opponents the rationalists. It is a "commerce" and not a "correspondence," they contend,<sup>1</sup> between certain parts of our experience and certain other parts, or a commerce between our ideas and our purposes, but not a commerce with

<sup>1</sup> See p. 162.

reality, for the making of truth is itself, in their eyes, the making of reality.

Secondly, it is another familiar characteristic of Pragmatism that, although it fails to give a satisfying account either of truth or reality, the one thing of which it is for ever talking of, as fundamental to our entire life as men, is *belief*.<sup>1</sup> This is the one thing upon which it makes everything else to hang—all knowledge and all action and all theory. And it is, of course, its manifest acceptance of belief as a fundamental principle of our human life, and as a true measure of reality, that has given to Pragmatism its religious atmosphere.<sup>2</sup> It is this that has made it such a welcome and such a credible creed to so many disillusioned and free-thinking people to-day, as well as to so many of the faithful and the orthodox. "For, in principle, Pragmatism overcomes the old antithesis of Faith and Reason. It shows, on the one hand, that faith must underlie all reason and pervade it, nay, that at bottom rationality

<sup>1</sup> In this attitude Pragmatism is manifestly in a state of rebellion against "Platonism," if we allow ourselves to think of Pragmatism as capable of confronting Plato. Plato, as we know, definitely subordinates "belief" to "knowledge" and "truth." "As being is to becoming," he says, "so is truth to belief (*Timaeus*, Jowett's translation). To Plato belief is a conjectural, or imaginative, estimate of reality; it deals rather with "appearance" or "becoming" than with "reality." "True being" he thinks of as revealed in the Ideas, or the rational entities that are his development and transformation of the "definition" of Socrates. Against all this rationalism Pragmatism (it is enough meantime merely to indicate the fact) would have us return to the common-sense, or the religious, position that it is invariably what we believe in that determines our notion of reality.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 159.

itself is the supremest postulate of Faith."<sup>1</sup> "Truth," again, as James reminds us, "lives in fact for the most part on a credit system. Our thoughts and beliefs [how literally true this is!] pass so long as nobody challenges them, just as bank-notes pass so long as nobody refuses them."<sup>2</sup>

Now it requires but the reflection of a moment to see that the various facts and considerations upon which the two last quotations, and the general devotion of Pragmatism to "belief," both repose, are all distinctly in favour of the acceptability of Pragmatism at the present time. There is nothing in which people in general are more interested at the beginning of this twentieth century than in belief. It is this, for example, that explains such a thing as the great success to-day in our English-speaking world of such an enterprise as the *Hibbert Journal of Philosophy and Religion*, or the still greater phenomenon of the world-wide interest of the hour in the subject of comparative religion. Most modern men, the writer is inclined to think, believe<sup>3</sup> a great deal

<sup>1</sup> From Dr. Schiller's *Humanism*.

<sup>2</sup> *Pragmatism*, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> It is this dissatisfaction at once with the abstractions of science and of rationalism and with the contradictions that seem to exist between them all and the facts of life and experience as we feel them that constitutes the great dualism, or the great opposition of modern times. I do not wish to emphasize this dualism, nor do I wish to set forth faith or belief in opposition to reason when I extract from both Pragmatism and Idealism the position, that it is belief rather than knowledge that is our fundamental estimate of reality. I do not believe, as I indicate in the text above, that this dualism is ultimate. It has come about only from an unfortunate setting of some parts of our nature, or of our experience in opposition to the whole of our nature, or the

more than they know, the chief difficulty about this fact being that there is no recognized way of expressing it in our science or in our philosophy, or of acting upon it in our behaviour in society. It is, however, only the undue prominence of mathematical and physical science since the time of Descartes<sup>1</sup> that has made evidence and demonstration the main consideration of philosophy instead of belief, man's true and fundamental estimate of reality.

We have already<sup>2</sup> pointed out that one of the main results of Pragmatism is the acceptance on the part of its leading upholders of our fundamental

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whole of our experience. That the opposition, however, between reason and faith still exists in many quarters, and that it is and has been the opposition of modern times, and that the great want of our times is a rational faith that shall recall the world of to-day out of its endless "distraction" (the word is Dr. Bosanquet's), I am certainly inclined to maintain. In proof of this statement it is enough to recall things like the words of Goethe about the conflict of belief and unbelief as the unique theme of the history of the world, or the "ethical headache which was literally a splitting headache," that Mr. Chesterton finds in the minds of many of our great Victorian writers. I shall take leave of it here with three references to its existence taken from the words or the work of living writers. The first shall be the opposition which Mr. Bertrand Russell finds in his *Philosophical Essays* (in the "Free Man's Worship") between the "world which science presents for our belief" and the "lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day." The second shall be the inconsistency that exists in Mr. Hugh S. R. Elliot's book upon *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*, between his initial acceptance of the mechanical, evolutionary system of modern science and his closing acceptance of feeling and poetry and love as the "deepest forms of happiness." The third shall be the declaration of Professor Sir Henry Jones of Glasgow (in the *Hibbert Journal*, 1903) that "one of the characteristics of our time is the contradiction that exists between its practical faith in morality and its theoretical distrust of the conceptions on which they rest."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 203 (note).

<sup>2</sup> See p. 7.

beliefs about the ultimately real and about the realization of our most deeply cherished purposes. In fact, reality in general is for them, we may say—in the absence from their writings of any better description,—simply that which we can “will,” or “believe in,” as the basis for action and for conscious “creative” effort, or constructive effort. As James himself puts it in his book on *The Meaning of Truth*: “Since the only realities we can talk about are objects believed in, the pragmatist, whenever he says ‘reality,’ means in the first instance what may count for the man himself as a reality, what he believes at the moment to be such. Sometimes the reality is a concrete sensible presence. . . . Or his idea may be that of an abstract relation, say of that between the sides and the hypotenuse of a triangle. . . . Each reality verifies and validates its own idea exclusively; and in each case the verification consists in the satisfactorily-ending consequences, mental or physical, which the idea was to set up.”

We shall later have to refer to the absence from Pragmatism of a criterion for achievement and for “consequences.” And, as far as philosophical theories are concerned, these are all, to the pragmatists, true or false simply in so far as they are practically credible or not. James is quite explicit, for example, about Pragmatism itself in this regard. “No pragmatist,” he holds, “can warrant the objective truth of what he says about the universe; he can



only believe it."<sup>1</sup> There is faith, in short, for the pragmatist, in every act, in every phase of thought, the faith that is implied in the realization of the purposes that underlie our attempted acts and thoughts. They eagerly accept, for example, the important doctrine of the modern logician, and the modern psychologist, as to the presence of volition in all "affirmation" and "judgment," seeing that in every case of affirmation there is a more or less active readjustment of our minds (or our bodies) to what either stimulates or impedes our activity.

A third outstanding characteristic of Pragmatism is the "deeper" view of human nature upon which, in contrast to Rationalism, it supposes itself to rest, and which it seeks to vindicate. It is this supposedly deeper view of human nature for which it is confessedly pleading when it insists, as it is fond of doing, upon the connexion of philosophy with the various theoretical and practical pursuits of mankind, with sciences like biology and psychology, and with social reform,<sup>2</sup> and so on. We have, it may be remembered, already intimated that even in practical America men have had their doubts about the depth of a philosophy that looks upon man as made in the main for action and achievement instead of, let us say, the realization of his higher nature. Still, few of the readers of James can

<sup>1</sup> From *Pragmatism and its Misunderstanders*.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 173.



have altogether failed to appreciate the significance of some of the many eloquent and suggestive paragraphs he has written upon the limitations of the rationalistic "temperament" and of its unblushing sacrifice of the entire wealth of human nature and of the various pulsating interests of men to the imaginary exigencies of abstract logic and "system."<sup>1</sup> To him and to his colleagues (as to Socrates, for that part of it) man is firstly a being who has habits and purposes, and who can, to some extent, control the various forces of his nature through *true knowledge*, and in this very discrepancy between the real and the ideal does there lie for the pragmatists the entire problem of philosophy—the problem of Plato, that of the attainment of true virtue through true knowledge.

Deferring, however, the question of the success of the pragmatists in this matter of the unfolding of the true relation between philosophy and human nature, let us think of a few of the teachings

<sup>1</sup> "You will be surprised to learn, then, that Messrs. Schiller's and Dewey's theories have suffered a hailstorm of contempt and ridicule. All rationalism has risen up against them. In influential quarters, Mr. Schiller in particular has been treated like an impudent school-boy who deserves a spanking. I should not mention this but for the fact that it throws so much light upon *that rationalist temper to which I have opposed the temper of pragmatism. Pragmatism is uncomfortable away from facts. Rationalism is comfortable only in the presence of abstractions.* This pragmatist talk about truths in the plural, about their utility and satisfactoriness, about the success with which they 'work,' etc., suggests to the typical intellectualist mind a sort of coarse, lame, second-rate makeshift article of truth" (James, *Pragmatism*, pp. 66-67; italics mine). The words about Rationalism being comfortable only in the world of abstractions are substantiated by the procedure of Bosanquet, to whom I refer in Chapter VIII., or by the procedure of Mr. Bertrand Russell, referred to on p. 169.

of experience upon this truly important and inevitable relation, which no philosophy indeed can for one moment afford to neglect. Insistence upon these facts or teachings and upon the reflections and criticisms to which they naturally give rise is certainly a deeply marked characteristic of Pragmatism.

Man, as has often been pointed out, is endowed with the power of reflection, not so much to enable him to understand the world either as a whole or in its detailed workings as to assist him in the further evolution of his life. His beliefs and choices and his spiritual culture are all, as it were, forces and influences in this direction. Indeed, it is always the soul or the life principle that is the important thing in any individual or any people, so far as a place in the world (or 'in "history"') is concerned.

Philosophers, as well as other men, often exchange (in the words of Lecky) the "love of truth" as such for the love of "*the* truth," that is to say, for the love of the system and the social arrangements that best suit their interests as thinkers. And they too are just as eager as other men for discipleship and influence and honour. Knowledge with them, in other words, means, as Bacon put it, "control"; and even with them it does not, and cannot, remain at the stage of mere cognition. It becomes in the end a conviction or a belief. And thus the philosopher with his system (even a Plato, or a

Hegel) is after all but a part of the universe, to be judged as such, along with other lives and other systems—a circumstance hit off early in the nineteenth century by German students when they used to talk of one's being able (in Berlin) to see the *Welt-Geist* (Hegel) "taking a walk" in the *Thiergarten*.

Reality again, so far as either life or science is concerned, means for every man that in which he is most fundamentally interested—ions and radium to the physicist of the hour, life to the biologist, God to the theologian, progress to the philanthropist, and so on.

Further, mankind in general is not likely to abandon its habit of estimating all systems of thought and philosophy from the point of view of their value as keys, or aids, to the problem of the meaning and the development of life as a whole. There is no abstract "truth" or "good" or "beauty" apart from the lives of beings who contemplate, and who seek to create, such things as truth and goodness and beauty.

To understand knowledge and intellect, again, we must indeed look at them in their actual development in connexion with the total vital or personal activity either of the average or even of the exceptional individual. And instead of regarding the affections and the emotions as inimical to knowledge, or as secondary and inferior to it, we ought to remember that they rest in general upon a broader and deeper attitude to

reality than does either the perception of the senses<sup>1</sup> or the critical analysis of the understanding. In both of these cases is the knowledge that we attain to limited in the main either to what is before us under the conditions of time and space, or to particular aspects of things that we mark off, or separate, from the totality of things. As Bergson reminds us, we "desire" and "will" with the "whole" of our past, but "think" only with "part" of it. Small wonder then that James seeks to connect such a broad phenomenon as religion with many of the unconscious factors (they are not all merely "biological") in the depth of our personality. Some of the instincts and the phenomena that we encounter there are things that transcend altogether the world that is within the scope of our senses or the reasoning faculties.

Truth, too, grows from age to age, and is simply the formulated knowledge humanity has of itself and its environment. And errors disappear, not so much in consequence of their logical refutation, as in consequence of their inutility and of their inability to control the life and thought of the free man. Readers of Schopenhauer will remember his frequent insistence upon this point of the gradual dissidence and disappearance of error, in place of its summary refutation.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 235 in the Bergson chapter where it is suggested that perception is limited to what interests us for vital or for practical purposes.

Our "reactions" upon reality are certainly part of what we mean by "reality," and our philosophy is only too truly "the history of our heart and life" as well as that of our intellectual activity. The historian of philosophy invariably acts upon a recognition of the personal and the national and the epochal influence in the evolution of every philosophical system. And even the new, or the fuller conception of life to which a given genius may attain at some stage or other of human civilization will still inevitably, in its turn, give place to a newer or a more perfect system.

Now Pragmatism is doubtless at fault in seeking to create the impression that Rationalism would seek to deny any, or all, of those characteristic facts of human nature. Still, it is to some extent justified in insisting upon their importance in view of the sharp conflict (we shall later refer to it) that is often supposed to exist between the theoretical and the practical interests of mankind, and that Rationalism sometimes seems to accept with comparative equanimity.<sup>1</sup> What Pragmatism is itself most of all seeking after is a view of human nature, and of things generally, in which the fullest justice is done to the facts upon which this very real conflict<sup>2</sup> of modern times may be said to rest.

A fourth characteristic of Pragmatism is its notorious "anti-intellectualism,"<sup>3</sup> its hostility to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 234 upon the "anti-intellectualism" in the philosophy of Bergson.

the merely dialectical use of terms and concepts and categories,<sup>1</sup> to argumentation that is unduly detached from the facts and the needs of our concrete human experience. This anti-intellectualism we prefer meantime to consider not so much in itself and on its own account (if this be possible with a negative creed) as in the light of the results it has had upon philosophy. There is, for example, the general clearing of the ground that has undoubtedly taken place as to the actual or the possible meaning of many terms or conceptions that have long been current with the transcendentalists, such as "pure thought," the "Absolute," "truth" in and for itself, philosophy as the "completely rational" interpretation of experience, and so on. And along with this clearing of the ground there are (and also in consequence of the pragmatist movement) a great many recent, striking concessions of Rationalism to practical, and to common-sense, ways of looking at things, the very existence of which cannot but have an important effect upon the philosophy of the near future. Among some of the more typical of these are the following :

From Mr. F. H. Bradley we have the emphatic declarations that the principle of dialectical opposition or the principle of "Non-Contradiction" (formerly, to himself and his followers, the "rule of the game" in philosophy) "does not settle anything about the nature of reality";

<sup>1</sup> See p. 4 and p. 237.



that "truth" is an "hypothesis," and that "except as a means to a foreign end it is useless and impossible"; and "when we judge truth by its own standard it is defective because it fails to include all the facts,"<sup>1</sup> and because its contents "cannot be made intelligible throughout and entirely"; that "no truth is idle," and that "all truth" has "practical" and æsthetic "consequences"; that there is "no such existing thing as pure thought";<sup>2</sup> that we cannot separate

<sup>1</sup> From "Truth and Copying," *Mind*, No. 62.

<sup>2</sup> From "Truth and Practice," in *Mind*. Cf. "This denial of transcendence, this insistence that all ideas, and more especially such ideas as those of God, are true and real just so far as they work, is to myself most welcome" (Bradley, in *Mind*, 1908, p. 227, "Ambiguity of Pragmatism"). Mr. Bradley has of recent years made so many such concessions, and has philosophized with such an admirable degree of independence, and has (also admirably) attached so much weight to his own experience of "metaphysics," and of other things besides, that many thinkers like Knox and Dewey and Schiller have been discussing whether he can any longer be regarded as a rationalist. One could certainly study, profitably, the whole evolution of philosophy in England during the last forty years by studying Mr. Bradley's development. He never was, of course, a Hegelian in the complete sense (who ever was?), and he has now certainly abandoned an abstract, formalistic Rationalism.

By way of an additional quotation or two from Mr. Bradley, typical of his advance in the direction of the practical philosophy for which Pragmatism stands, we may append the following: "I long ago pointed out that theory takes its origin from practical collision [the main contention of Professor Dewey and his associates]. *If Pragmatism means this, I am a pragmatist*" (from an article in *Mind* on the "Ambiguity of Pragmatism"—italics mine). "We may reject the limitation of knowledge to the mere world of events which happen, and may deny the claim of this world to be taken as an ultimate foundation. Reality or the Good will be the satisfaction of all the wants of our nature, and *theoretical truth will be the perception of ideas which directly satisfy one of those wants, and so invariably make part of the general satisfaction*. This is a doctrine which, to my mind, commends itself as true, though it naturally would call for a great deal of explanation" (from *Mind*, July 1904, p. 325). And, as typical of the kind of final

truth and practice ; that " absolute certainty is not requisite for working purposes " ; that it is a " superstition<sup>1</sup> to think that the intellect is the highest part of us," and that it is well to attack a one-sided " intellectualism " ; that both " intellectualism " and " voluntarism " are " one-sided," and that he has no " objection to identifying reality with goodness or satisfaction, so long as this does not mean merely practical satisfaction." <sup>2</sup> Then from this same author comes the following familiar statement about philosophy as a whole : " Philosophy always will be hard, and what it promises in the end is no clear vision nor any complete understanding or vision, but its certain reward is a continual and a heightened appreciation [this is the result of science as well as of philosophy] of the ineffable mystery of life, of life in all its complexities and all its unity and all its worth." <sup>3</sup>

Equally typical and equally important is the following concession from Professor Taylor,

philosophy to which the philosophical reconstruction of the future must somehow attain out of the present quarrel between Pragmatism and Rationalism, the following : " If there were no force in the world but the vested love of God, if the wills in the past were one in effort and in substance with the one Will, if in that Will they are living still and still are so loving, and if again by faith, suffering, and love my will is made really one with theirs, here indeed we should have found at once our answer and our refuge. But with this we should pass surely beyond the limits of any personal individualism " (from *Mind*, July 1904, p. 316). Dr. Schiller, by the way, has a list of such concessions to Pragmatism on the part of Mr. Bradley in *Mind*, 1910, p. 35.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the saying of Herbert Spencer (*Autobiography*, i. 253) that a " belief in the unqualified supremacy of reason [is] the superstition of philosophers."

<sup>2</sup> See p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> " Truth and Practice," *Mind*, No. 51.

although, of course, to many people it would seem no concession at all, but rather the mere statement of a fact, which our Neo-Hegelians have only made themselves ridiculous by seeming to have so long overlooked: "Mere truth for the intellect can never be quite the same as ultimate reality. For in mere truth we get reality only in its intellectual aspect, as that which affords a higher satisfaction to thought's demand for consistency and systematic unity in its object. And as we have seen, this demand can never be quite satisfied by thought itself.<sup>1</sup> For thought, to remain thought, must always be something less than the whole reality which it knows."<sup>2</sup>

And we may add also from Professor Taylor the following declaration in respect of the notorious inability of Neo-Hegelian Rationalism to furnish the average man with a theory of reality in the contemplation of which he can find at least an adequate motive to conscious effort and achievement: "Quite apart from the facts, due to personal shortcomings and confusions, it is inherent in the nature of metaphysical study that it can make no positive addition to our information, and can itself supply no motive for practical endeavour."<sup>3</sup>

Many of those findings are obviously so harmonious with some of the more familiar

<sup>1</sup> It would be easy to quote to the same effect from other Hegelian students, or, for that part of it, from Hegel himself.

<sup>2</sup> *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 411.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 414.

formulas of the pragmatists that there would seem to be ample warrant for associating them with the results of the pragmatist movement. This is particularly the case, it would seem, with the concession of Mr. Bradley with respect of the "practical" or "hypothetical" conception that we ought to entertain of "truth" and "thinking," and also with the strictures passed by him upon "mere truth" and "mere intellectualism," and with Professor Taylor's position in respect of the inadequacy of the rationalist theory of reality, as in no sense a "dynamic" or an "incentive" for action. And we might well regard Professor Taylor's finding in respect of mere systematic truth or the "Absolute" (for they are the same thing to him) as confirmatory of Dr. Schiller's important contention that "in Absolutism" the two "poles" of the "moral" and the "intellectual" character of the Deity "fall apart." This means, we will remember, that the truth of abstract intellectualism is not the truth for action,<sup>1</sup> that absolutism is not able to effect or harmonize between the truth of systematic knowledge and moral truth—if, indeed, there be any such thing as moral truth on the basis of a pure Rationalism.

To be sure, both the extent and even the reality of all this supposed cession of ground in philosophy to the pragmatists has been doubted and denied by the representatives of Rationalism. They would be questioned, too, by many sober

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 14.

thinkers and scholars who have long regarded Hegelian intellectualism and pragmatist "voluntarism" as extremes in philosophy, as inimical, both of them, to the interests of a true and catholic conception of philosophy. The latter, as we know from Aristotle, should be inclusive of the realities both of the intellectual and the practical life.

Pragmatist criticisms of Rationalism, again, may fairly be claimed to have been to a large extent anticipated by the independent findings of living idealist thinkers like Professors Pringle-Pattison, Baillie, Jones, and others, in respect of the supposed extreme claims of Hegelianism, as well as by similar findings and independent constructive efforts on the part of the recent group of the Oxford Personal Idealists.<sup>1</sup> That there is still a place for pragmatist anti-intellectualism is evidently the conclusion to be drawn from such things as the present wide acceptance of the philosophy of Bergson, or the recent declarations of Mr. Bradley that we are justified "in the intelligent refusal to accept as final an theoretical criterion which actually so far exists," and that the "action of narrow consistency must be definitely given up."

The reflection ought, moreover, to be inserted here that even if Pragmatism has been of some possible service in bringing forth from rationalists some of their many recent confessions of the limitations of an abstract intellectualism, it is

<sup>1</sup> See the well-known volume *Personal Idealism*, edited by Mr. Sturt.

not at all unlikely that Rationalism in its turn may succeed in convicting Pragmatism of an undue emphasis<sup>1</sup> upon volition and action and upon merely practical truth.

We shall now terminate the foregoing characterization of Pragmatism by a reference to two or three other specific things for which it may, with more or less justice, be supposed to stand in philosophy. These are (1) the repudiation of the "correspondence view"<sup>2</sup> of the relation of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 147 and 193.

<sup>2</sup> By this notion is meant the common-sense idea that truth in all cases "corresponds" to fact, my perception of the sunset to the real sunset, my "idea" of a "true" friend to a real person whose outward acts "correspond to" or "faithfully reflect" his inner feelings. See the first chapter of Mr. Joachim's book upon *The Nature of Truth*, where this notion is examined and found wanting. It is probably the oldest notion of truth, and yet one that takes us readily into philosophy from whatever point of view we examine it. It was held by nearly all the Greek philosophers before the time of the Sophists, who first began to teach that truth is what it "appears to be"—the "relativity" position that is upheld, for example, by Goethe, who said that "When I know my relation to myself and to the outer world I call this truth. And thus every man can have his own truth, and yet truth is always the same." The common-sense view was held also by St. Augustine in the words, "That is true what is really what it seems to be (*verum est quod ita est, ut videtur*)," by Thomas Aquinas as the "adequacy of the intellect to the thing," in so far as the intellect says that that is which really is, or that that is not which is not (*adaequatio intellectus et rei*), by Suarez, by Goclen, who made it a conformity of the judgment with the thing. Its technical difficulties begin to appear, say in Hobbes, who held that truth consists in the fact of the subject and the predicate being a name of the same thing, or even in Locke, who says: "Truth then seems to me in the proper import of the word to signify nothing but the joining or separating of signs, as the things signified by them, do agree, or disagree, one with another" (*Essay*, iv, 5. 2). How can *things* "agree" or "disagree" with one another? And an "idea" of course is, anyhow, not a "thing" with a shape and with dimensions that "correspond" to "things," any more than is a "judgment" a relation of two "ideas" "corresponding" to the "relations" of two "things."



truth to reality, (2) the rejection of the idea of there being any ultimate or rigid distinction between "appearance" and "reality," and (3) the reaffirmation of the "teleological" point of view as characteristic of philosophy in distinction from science.

As for (1) it has already been pointed out that this idea of the misleading character of the ordinary "correspondence notion" of truth is claimed by pragmatists as an important result of their proposal to test truth by the standard of the consequences involved in its acceptance.<sup>1</sup> The ordinary reader may not, to be sure, be aware of the many difficulties that are apt to arise in philosophy from an apparent acceptance of the common-sense notion of truth as somehow simply a

<sup>1</sup> "The mind is not a 'mirror' which passively reflects what it chances to come upon. It initiates and tries; and its correspondence with the 'outer world' means that its effort successfully meets the environment in behalf of the organic interest from which it sprang. The mind, like an antenna, feels the way for the organism. It gropes about, advances and recoils, making many random efforts and many failures; but it is always urged into taking the *initiative* by the pressure of interest, and doomed to success or failure in some hour of trial when it meets and engages the environment. Such is mind, and such, according to James, *are all its operations*" (Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 351). Or the following: "I hope that," said James in the "lectures" embodied in *Pragmatism* (New York, 1908) . . . "the concreteness and closeness to facts of pragmatism . . . may be what approves itself to you as its most satisfactory peculiarity. It only follows here the example of the sister sciences, interpreting the unobserved by the observed. It brings old and new harmoniously together. *It converts the absolutely empty notion of a static relation of 'correspondence' between our minds and reality, into that of a rich and active commerce (that any one may follow in detail and understand) between particular thoughts of ours and the great universe of other experiences in which they play their parts and have their uses*" (p. 68; italics mine).

duplicate or a "copy" of external reality. There is the difficulty, say, of our ever being able to prove such a correspondence without being (or "going") somehow beyond both the truth and the reality in question, so as to be able to detect either coincidence or discrepancy. Or, we might again require some bridge between the ideas in our minds and the supposed reality outside them—"sensations" say, or "experiences," something, in other words, that would be accepted as "given" and indubitable both by idealists and realists. And there would be the difficulty, too, of saying whether we have to begin for the purposes of all reflective study with what is within consciousness or with what is outside it—in matter say, or in things. And if the former, how we can ever get to the latter, and *vice versa*. And so on with the many kindred subtleties that have divided thinkers into idealists and realists and conceptualists, monists, dualists, parallelists, and so on.

Now Pragmatism certainly does well in proposing to steer clear of all such difficulties and pitfalls of the ordinary "correspondence notion." And as we shall immediately refer to its own working philosophy in the matter, we shall meantime pass over this mere point of its rejection of the "correspondence notion" with one or two remarks of a critical nature. (1) Unfortunately for the pragmatists the rejection of the correspondence notion is just as important a feature

of Idealism<sup>1</sup> as it is of Pragmatism. The latter system therefore can lay no claim to any uniqueness or superiority in this connexion. (2) Pragmatism, as we may perhaps see, cannot maintain its position that the distinction between "idea" and "object" is one "within experience itself" (rather than a distinction between experience and something supposedly outside it) without travelling further in the direction of Idealism<sup>2</sup> than it has hitherto been prepared to do. By such a travelling in the direction of Idealism we mean a far more thorough-going recognition of the part played in the making of reality by the "personal" factor, than it has as yet contemplated either in its "instrumentalism" or in its "radical empiricism." (3) There is, after all, an element of truth in the correspondence notion to which Pragmatism fails to do justice. We shall refer to this failure in a subsequent chapter<sup>3</sup> when again looking into its theory of truth and reality.

Despite these objections there is, however, at least one particular respect in regard to which Pragmatism may legitimately claim some credit for its rejection of the correspondence notion. This is its insistence that the truth is not (as it must be on the correspondence theory) a "datum" or a "presentation," not something given to

<sup>1</sup> "On any view like mine to speak of truth as in the end copying reality, would be senseless" (Bradley in *Mind*, July 1911, "On some Aspects of Truth").

<sup>2</sup> See p. 143 and p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 127 and p. 133.

us by the various objects and things without us, or by their supposed effects upon our senses and our memory and our understanding. It rather, on the contrary, maintains Pragmatism, a "construction" on the part of the mind, an attitude of our "expectant" (or "believing") consciousness, into which our own reactions upon things enter at least as much as do their supposed effects and impressions upon us. Of course the many difficulties of this thorny subject are by no means cleared up by this mere indication of the attitude of Pragmatism, and we shall return in a later chapter<sup>1</sup> to this idea of truth as a construction of the mind instead of a datum, taking care at the same time, however, to refer to the failure of which we have spoken on the part of Pragmatism to recognize the element of truth that is still contained in the correspondence notion.

(2) The rejection of the idea of any rigid, or ultimate distinction between "appearance" and "reality." This is a still broader rejection than the one to which we have just referred, and may, therefore, be thought of as another more or less fundamental reason for the rejection either of the copy or of the correspondence theory of truth. The reality of things, as Pragmatism conceives it, is not something already "fixed" and "determined," but rather, something that is "plastic" and "modifiable," something that is, in fact, under-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 148-9.

going a continuous process of modification, or development, of one kind or another. It must always, therefore, the pragmatist would hold, be defined in terms of the experiences and the activities through which it is known and revealed and through which it is, to some extent, even modified.<sup>1</sup>

Pragmatism, as we may remember, has been called by James "immediate" or "radical" empiricism, although in one of his last books he seeks to give an independent development to these two doctrines. The cardinal principle of this philosophy is that "things are what they are experienced as being, or that to give a just account of anything is to tell what that thing is experienced to be."<sup>2</sup> And it is perhaps this aspect of the new philosophy of Pragmatism that is most amply and most attractively exhibited in the books of James. It is presented, too, with much freshness and skill in Professor Bawden's<sup>3</sup> book upon Pragmatism, which is an attempt, he says, "to set forth the necessary assumptions of a philosophy in which experience becomes self-conscious as a method."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *What is Pragmatism?* (Pratt), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Principles of Pragmatism*, Houghton Mifflin, 1910.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface. This last sentence, by the way, may be taken as one of the many illustrations that may be given of the crudities and difficulties of some of the literature of Pragmatism. It shows that Pragmatism may sometimes be as guilty of abstractionism as is Rationalism itself. It is not "experience" that becomes "self-conscious," but only "persons." And, similarly, it is only "persons" who pursue "ends" and "satisfy" desires, and who may be said to have a "method." Professor Bawden, of course, means that it is to the credit of Pragmatism that it approaches experience just as it finds it,

"The new philosophy," proceeds Bawden,<sup>1</sup> "is a pragmatic idealism. Its method is at once intrinsic and immanent and organic or functional. By saying that its method is functional, we mean that its experience must be interpreted from within. We cannot jump out of our skins . . . we cannot pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. We find ourselves in mid-stream of the Niagara of experience, and may define what it is by working back and forth within the current." "We do not know where we are going, but we are on the way" [the contradiction is surely apparent]. Then, like James, Bawden goes on to interpret Pragmatism by showing what things like self-consciousness, experience, science, social consciousness, space, time, and causation *are* by showing how they "appear," and how they "function" — "experience" itself being simply, to him and to his friends, a "dynamic system," "self-sustaining," a "whole leaning on nothing."

The extremes of this "immediate" or "radical" philosophy appear to non-pragmatists to be reached when we read words like those just quoted about the Niagara stream of our experience, and about our life as simply movement and acceleration, or about the celebrated "I think" of Descartes as equally well [!] set forth under the form "It

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and that its chief method is the interpretation of the same experience — an easy thing, doubtless, to profess, but somewhat difficult to carry out.

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Pragmatism*, Houghton Mifflin, 1910, pp. 44-45.



thinks," or "thinking is going on," or about the "being" of the individual person as consisting simply in a "doing." "All this we hold," says Bawden, "*to be not materialism but simply energism.*" "There is no 'truth,' only 'truths'—this is another way of putting it—and the only criterion of truth is the changing one of the image or the idea which comes out of our impulses or of the conflict of our habits." The end of all this modern flowing philosophy is, of course, the "Pluralism" of James, the universe as a society of functioning selves in which reality "may exist in a distributive form, or in the shape, not of an All, but of a set of eaches." "The essence of life," as he puts it in his famous essay on Bergson,<sup>1</sup> "is its continually changing character," and we only call it a "confusion" sometimes because we have grown accustomed in our sciences and philosophies to isolate "elements" and "differents" which in reality are "all dissolved in one another."<sup>2</sup> "Relations of every sort, of time, space, difference, likeness, change, rate, cause, or what not, are just as integral members of the sensational flux as terms are." "Pluralism lets things really exist in the each form, or distributively. Its type of union . . . is different from the monistic type of all-*einheit*. It is what I call the strung-along type, the type of continuity, contiguity, or concatenation." And so on.

(3) The reaffirmation of the teleological point

<sup>1</sup> P. 253.

<sup>2</sup> P. 256.

of view. After the many illustrations and references that have already been given in respect of the tendencies of Pragmatism, it is perhaps hardly necessary to point out that an insistence upon the necessity to philosophy of the "teleological" point of view, of the consideration of both thoughts and things from the point of view of their purpose or utility, is a deeply-marked characteristic of Pragmatism. In itself this demand can hardly be thought of as altogether new, for the idea of considering the nature of anything in the light of its final purpose or end is really as old in our European thought as the philosophy of Aristotle or Anaxagoras. Almost equally familiar is the kindred idea upon which Pragmatism is inclined to felicitate itself, of finding the roots of metaphysic "in ethics," in the facts of conduct, in the facts of the "ideal" or the "personal" order which we tend<sup>1</sup> in human civilization to impose upon what is otherwise thought of by science as the natural order. The form, however, of the teleological argument to which Pragmatism may legitimately be thought to have directed our attention is that of the possible place in the world of reality, and in the world of thought, of the effort and the free initiative of the individual. This place, unfortunately (the case is quite different with Bergson<sup>2</sup>), Pragmatism has been able, up to the present time, to define, in the main, only negatively

<sup>1</sup> See p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 240 *et ff.*

—by means of its polemic against the completed and the self-completing "Absolute" of the Neo-Hegelian Rationalists. What this polemic is we can best indicate by quoting from Hegel himself a passage or a line of the reflection against which it is seeking to enter an emphatic and a reasoned protest, and then after this a passage or two from some of our Anglo-Hegelians in the same connexion.

"The consummation," says Hegel, in a familiar and often-quoted passage, "of the Infinite aim (*i.e.* of the purpose of God as omniscient and almighty) consists merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem unaccomplished."<sup>1</sup> Now although there is a sense in which this great saying must for ever be maintained to contain an element of profound truth,<sup>2</sup> the attitude of Pragmatism in regard to it would be, firstly, that of a rooted objection to its outspoken intellectualism. How can the chief work of the Almighty be conceived to be merely that of getting rid somehow from our minds, or from his, of *our* mental confusions? And then, secondly, an equally rooted objection is taken to the implication that the individual human being should allow himself to entertain, as possibly true, a view of the general trend of things that

<sup>1</sup> Wallace's *Logic of Hegel*, p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> There is a sentence in one of Hawthorne's stories to the effect that man's work is always illusory to some extent, while God is the only worker of realities. I would not go as far as this, believing, as I do, with the pragmatists, that man is at least a fellow-worker with God. But I do find Pragmatism lacking, as I indicate elsewhere, in any adequate recognition of the work of God, or the Absolute in the universe.

renders any notion of his playing an appreciable part therein a theoretical and a practical absurdity.<sup>1</sup> This notion (or "conceit," if you will) he can surrender only by ceasing to think of his own consciousness of "effort" and of the part played by "effort"<sup>2</sup> and "invention" in the entire animal and human world, and also of his consciousness of duty and of the ideal in general. This latter consciousness of itself bids him to realize certain "norms" or regulative prescripts simply because they are consonant with that higher will which is to him the very truth of his own nature. He cannot, in other words, believe that he is consciously obliged to work and to realize his higher nature for nothing. The accom-

<sup>1</sup> I am thinking of such considerations as are suggested in the following sentences from Maeterlinck: "As we advance through life, it is more and more brought home to us that nothing takes place that is not in accord with some curious, preconceived design; and of this we never breathe a word, we scarcely let our minds dwell upon it, but of its existence, somewhere above our heads, we are absolutely convinced" (*The Treasure of the Humble*, p. 17). "But this much at least is abundantly proved to us, that in the work-a-day lives of the very humblest of men spiritual phenomena manifest themselves—mysterious, direct workings, that bring soul nearer to soul" (*ibid.* 33). "Is it to-day or to-morrow that moulds us? Do we not all spend the greater part of our lives under the shadow of an event that has not yet come to pass?" (*ibid.* 51). I do not of course for one moment imply that the facts of experience referred to in such sentences as these should be received at any higher value than their face value, for there are indeed many considerations to be thought of in connexion with this matter of the realization of our plans and our destiny as individuals. But I do mean that the beliefs to which men cling in this respect are just as much part of the subject-matter of philosophy as other beliefs, say the belief in truth as a whole, or the beliefs investigated by the Society for Psychical Research. And there may conceivably be a view of human nature upon which the beliefs in question are both natural and rational.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 101.

plishment of ends and of the right must, in other words, be rationally believed by him to be part of the nature of things. It is this conviction, we feel sure, that animates Pragmatism in the opposition it shares both with common sense and with the radical thought of our time against the meaninglessness to Hegelianism, or to Absolutism,<sup>1</sup> many of the hopes and many of the convictions that we feel to be so necessary and so real in the life of mankind generally.

And there are other lines of reflection among Neo-Hegelians against which Pragmatism is equally determined to make a more or less definite protest, in the interest, as before, of our practical and of our moral activity. We may recall, to begin with, the memorable words of Mr. Bradley, in his would-be refutation of the charge that the ideals of Absolutism "to some people" fail to "satisfy our nature's demands." "Am I," he indignantly asks, "to understand that we are to have all we want, and have it just as we want it?" adding (almost in the next line) that he "understands," of course, that the "views" of Absolutism, or those of any other philosophy, are to be compared "only with views" that aim at "theoretical consistency" and not with mere practical beliefs.<sup>2</sup> Now, speaking for the moment for Pragmatism, can it be truly philosophical to

<sup>1</sup> See p. 198 on Dr. Bosanquet's dismissal of the problem of teleology from the sphere of reasoned philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> *Appearance and Reality*, p. 561.



contemplate with equanimity the idea of any such ultimate conflict as is implied in these words between the demands of the intellect<sup>1</sup> and the demands of emotion—to use the term most definitely expressive of a personal, as distinct from a merely intellectual satisfaction?

Then again there is, for example, the dictum of Dr. McTaggart, that there is “no reason to trust God’s goodness without a demonstration which removes the matter from the sphere of faith.”<sup>2</sup> May there not, we would ask, be a view of things according to the truth of which the confidence of the dying Socrates in the reasonableness and the goodness of God are at least as reasonable as his confession, at the same time, of his ignorance of the precise, or the particular, fate both of the just and of the unjust? And is not, too, such a position as that expressed in these words of Dr. McTaggart’s about a logically complete reason for believing in the essential righteousness of things now ruled out of court by some of the concessions of his brother rationalists to Pragmatism, to which reference has already been made? It is so ruled out, for example, even by Mr. Bradley’s condemnation as a “pernicious prejudice” of the idea that “what is wanted for working purpose is the last theoretical certainty about things.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> I think that I have taken this phrase from *Some Dogmas of Religion*.

<sup>3</sup> From “Truth and Copying,” *Mind*, No. 62.



## CHAPTER IV

### PRAGMATISM AND HUMAN ACTIVITY

It requires now but a slight degree of penetration to see that beneath this entire matter of an apparent opposition between our "theoretical" and our "practical" satisfaction, and beneath much of the pragmatist insistence upon the "consequences" of ideas and of systems of thought, there is the great question of the simple fact of human action and of its significance for philosophy. And it might truly be said that the raising of this question is not merely another of the more or less definitely marked features of Pragmatism, but in some respects it is one outstanding characteristic.

For some reason or other, or for some strange combination of reasons, the phenomenon that we call "action"<sup>1</sup> (the activity of man as an

<sup>1</sup> By action in this chapter and elsewhere in this book, I do not mean the mere exhibition or expenditure of physical energy. I mean human activity in general, inclusive of the highest manifestations of this activity, such as the search for truth, contemplation, belief, creative activity of one kind or another, and so on. There is no belief and no contemplation that is not practical as well as theoretical, no truth that fails to shape and to mould the life of the person who entertains it. I

agent) and the apparently simple facts of the reality and the intelligibility of action have long been regarded as matters of altogether secondary or subordinate importance by the rationalism of philosophy and by the mechanical philosophy of science. This Rationalism and this ostensibly certain and demonstrable mechanical philosophy of science suppose that the one problem of human thought is simply that of the nature of truth or of the nature of reality (the reality of the "physical" world) as if either (or each) of these things were an entity on its own account, an absolutely final finding or consideration. That this has really been the case so far as philosophy is concerned is proved by the fact even of the existence of the many characteristic deliverances and concessions of Rationalism in respect of Pragmatism to which reference has already been made in the preceding chapter. And that it has also been the case so far as science is concerned is proved by the existence of the many dogmatic attempts of many natural philosophers from Holbach to Haeckel to apply the "iron laws" of matter and motion to the

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quite agree with Maeterlinck, and with Bergson and others, that the soul is to some extent limited by the demands of action and speech, and by the duties and the conventions of social life, but I still believe in the action test for contemplations and thoughts and beliefs and ideas, however lofty. It is only the thoughts that we can act out, that we can consciously act upon in our present human life, and that we can persuade others to act upon, that are valuable to ourselves and to humanity. It is to their discredit that so many men and so many thinkers entertain, and give expression to, views about the universe which renders their activities as agents and as thinkers and as seekers quite inexplicable.

reality of everything else under heaven,<sup>1</sup> and of everything in the heavens in spite of the frequent confessions of their own colleagues with regard to the actual and the necessary limits and limitations of science and of the scientific outlook.

Only slowly and gradually, as it were, has the consideration come into the very forefront of our speculative horizon that there is for man as a thinking being *no rigid separation* between theory and practice, between intellect and volition, between action and thought, between fact and act, between truth and reality.<sup>2</sup> There is clearly volition or aim, for example, in the search after truth. And there is certainly purpose in the attention<sup>3</sup> that is involved even in the simplest

<sup>1</sup> There are, of course, no heavens in the old mediaeval and Aristotelian sense after the work of Copernicus and Galileo in the physical sciences, and of Kant in the realm of mind.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Moore well points out (*Pragmatism and its Critics*, p. 13) that the "challenge" of the idea that our thinking has "two foundations: one, as the method of purposing—its 'practical' function; the other as merely the expression of the specific and independent instinct to know—its 'intellectual' function," marks the "beginnings of the pragmatic movement." The idea of two kinds of thought goes back to Aristotle and is one of the most famous distinctions of thought. It dominated the entire Middle Ages, and it is still at the root of the false idea that "culture" can be separated from work and service for the common good. I am glad, as I indicate in the text, a few lines further on, that the idealists are doing their share with the pragmatists in breaking it up. In America there is no practical distinction between culture and work. See my chapter on Pragmatism as Americanism.

<sup>3</sup> The importance of this consideration about the "attention" that is (as a matter of fact and a matter of necessity) involved in all "perception," cannot possibly be exaggerated. We perceive in childhood and throughout life in the main, what interests us, and what affects our total and organic activity. It is, that is to say, our motor activity, and its direction, that determine what we see and perceive and experience. And in the higher reaches of our life, on the levels of art and religion and philosophy, this determining power becomes what we call our

piece of perception, the selection of what interests and affects us out of the total field of vision or experience. And it is equally certain that there is thought in action—so long, that is to say, as action is regarded as action and not as impulse. Again, the man who wills the truth submits himself to an imperative just as surely as does the man who explicitly obeys the law of duty. It is thus impossible, as it were, even in the so-called intellectual life, to distinguish absolutely between theoretical and practical considerations—"truth" meaning invariably the relations obtaining in some "sphere," or order, of fact which we separate off for some purpose or other from the infinite whole of reality. Equally impossible is it to distinguish absolutely between the theoretical and the practical in the case of the highest theoretical activity, in the case, say, of the "contemplation" that Aristotle talks of as the most "godlike" activity of man. This very contemplation, as our Neo-Hegelian<sup>1</sup> friends

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reason and our will and our selective attention. Perception, in other words, is a kind of selective activity, involving what we call impulse and effort and will. Modern philosophy has forgotten this in its treatment of our supposed perception of the world, taking this to be something *given* instead of something that is *constructed* by our activity. Hence its long struggle to overcome both the apparent materialism of the world of the senses, and the gap, or hiatus, that has been created by Rationalism between the world as we think it, and the world as it really is.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Professor Bosanquet, in his 1908 inaugural lecture at St. Andrews upon *The Practical Value of Moral Philosophy*. "Theory does indeed belong to Practice. It is a form of conation" (p. 9). It "should no doubt be understood as Theoria, or the entire unimpeded life of the soul" (p. 11; italics mine).

are always reminding us, is an activity that is just as much a characteristic of man, as is his power of setting his limbs in motion.

We have referred to the desire of the pragmatists to represent, and to discover, a supposedly deeper or more comprehensive view of human nature than that implicitly acted upon by Intellectualism—a view that should provide, as they think, for the organic unity of our active and our so-called reflective tendencies. This desire is surely eminently typical of what we would like to think of as the rediscovery by Pragmatism for philosophy, of the active, or the volitional, aspects of the conscious life of man, and along with this important side of our human nature, the reality also of the activities and the purposes that are revealed in what we sometimes speak of as unconscious nature. The world we know, it would hold, in the spirit and almost in the letter of Bergson, lives and grows by experiment,<sup>1</sup> and by activities and processes and adjustments. Pragmatism has doubtless, as we pointed out, been prone to think of itself as the only philosophy that can bake bread, that can speak to man in terms of the actual life of effort and struggle that he seems called upon to live in the environment in which he finds himself. And, as we have just been insisting, the

<sup>1</sup> This is surely the teaching of the new physics in respect of the radio-active view of matter. I take up this point again in the Bergson chapter.



main ground of its hostility to Rationalism is the apparent tendency of the latter to treat the various concepts and hypotheses that have been devised to explain the world, and to render it intelligible, as if they were themselves of more importance than the real persons and the real happenings that constitute the world of our experience.<sup>1</sup>

If it were at all desirable to recapitulate to any extent those phenomena connected with Pragmatism that seem to indicate its rediscovery of the fact of action, and of the fact of its meaning for philosophy, as its one outstanding characteristic, we may point to such considerations as the following: (1) The fact of its having sought to advance from the stage of a mere "instrumentalist" view of human thought to that of an outspoken "humanism" or a socialized utilitarianism. (2) The fact of its seeking to leave us (as the outcome of philosophy) with all our more important "beliefs," with a general "working" view of the world in which such things as religion and ideals and enthusiasm are adequately recognized. Pragmatism is really, as we have put it, more interested in belief than in knowledge, the former being to it the characteristic, the conquering attitude of man to the world in which he finds himself. (3) Its main object is to establish a dynamical view of reality, as that which is "everywhere in the making," as that which signifies to every person firstly that aspect of the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 238.



life of things in which he is for the time being most vitally interested.<sup>1</sup> (4) In the spirit of the empirical philosophy generally its main anxiety is to do the fullest justice to all the aspects of our so-called human experience, looking upon theories and systems as but points of view for the interpretation of this experience, and of the great universal life that transcends it. And proceeding upon the theory that a true metaphysic must become a true "dynamic" or a true incentive to human motive, it seeks the relationships and affiliations that have been pointed out with all the different liberating and progressive tendencies in the history of human thought. (5) It would "consult moral experience directly," finding in the world of our ordinary moral and social effort a spiritual reality<sup>2</sup> that raises the individual out of and above and beyond himself. And it bears testimony in its own more or less imperfect manner to the autonomous element<sup>3</sup> in our human personality that, in the moral life, and in such things as religious aspiration and creative effort and social service, transcends the merely theoretical descriptions of the world with which we are familiar in the generalizations of science and of history.

Without attempting meanwhile to probe at all deeply into this pragmatist glorification of "action" and its importance to philosophy, let us think of a

<sup>1</sup> See p. 143 or p. 229 (note).

<sup>2</sup> See p. 34 in Chapter II, in reference to the idea of M. Blondel.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 147 and p. 265.

few of the considerations that may be urged in support of this idea from sources outside those of the mere practical tendencies and the affiliations of Pragmatism itself.

There is first of all the consideration that it is the fact of action that unites or brings together what we call "desire" and what we call "thought," the world of our desires and emotions and the world of our thoughts and our knowledge. This is really a consideration of the utmost importance to us when we think of what we have allowed ourselves to call the characteristic dualism<sup>1</sup> of modern times, the discrepancy that seems to exist between the world of our desires and the impersonal world of science—which latter world educated people are apt to think of as the world before which everything else must bend and break, or at least bow. Our point here is not merely that of the humiliating truth of the wisdom of the wiseacres who used to tell us in our youth that we will anyhow have to act in spite of all our unanswered questions about things, but the plain statement of the fact that (say or think what we will) it is in *conscious action* that our desires and our thoughts *do* come together, and that it is there that they are both seen to be but partial expressions of the one reality—the life that is in things and in ourselves, and that engenders in us both emotions and thoughts, even if the latter do sometimes seem to lie "too deep for tears."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 65, note 3.

It is with this life and with the objects and aims and ends and realities that develop and sustain it that all our thoughts, as well as all our desires, are concerned. If action, therefore, could only be properly understood, if it can somehow be seen in its universal or its cosmic significance, there would be no discrepancy and no gap between the world of our ideals and the world of our thoughts. We would know what we want,<sup>1</sup> and we would want and desire what we know we can get—the complete development of our personality.

Again there is the evidence that exists in the sciences of biology and anthropology in support of the important role played in both animal and human evolution by effort and choice and volition and experimentation. "Already in the contractibility of protoplasm and in the activities of typical protozoons do we find 'activities' that imply<sup>2</sup> volition of some sort or degree, for there appears to be some selection of food and some spontaneity of movement: changes of direction, the taking of a circuitous course in avoidance of an obstruction, etc., indicate this." Then again, "there are such things as the diversities in secondary sexual characters (the 'after-thoughts of reproduction' as they are called), the endless shift of parasites, the power of animals to alter their coloration to suit environment, and the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 192, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Needham, *General Biology*, 1911. For the mention of this book as a reliable recent manual I am indebted to my colleague, Professor Willey of McGill University.

complex 'internal stimuli' of the higher animals in their breeding periods and activities, which make us see only too clearly what the so-called struggle for life has been in the animal world." . . .

Coming up to man let us think of what scientists point out as the effects of man's disturbing influence in nature, and then pass from these on to the facts of anthropology in respect of the conquest of environment by what we call invention and inheritance and free initiative. "In placing *invention*," says a writer of to-day in a recent brilliant book, "at the bottom of the scale of conditions [*i.e.* of the conditions of social development], I definitely break with the opinion that human evolution is throughout a purely natural process. . . . It is pre-eminently an *artificial construction*."<sup>1</sup> Now it requires but the reflection of a moment or two upon considerations such as the foregoing, and upon the attested facts of history as to the breaking up of the tyranny of habit and custom by the force of reflection and free action and free initiative, to grasp how really great should be the significance to philosophy of the active and the volitional nature of man that is thus demonstrably at the root not only of our progress, but of civilization itself.

If it be objected that while there cannot, indeed, from the point of view of the general culture and civilization of mankind, be any question of the importance to philosophy of the

<sup>1</sup> Marett, *Anthropology*, p. 155.

active effort and of the *active thought* that underlie this stupendous achievement, the case is perhaps somewhat different when we try to think of the pragmatist glorification of our human action from the point of view of the (physical ?) universe as a whole.<sup>1</sup> To this reflection it is possible here to say but one or two things. Firstly, there is apparently at present no warrant in science for seeking to separate off this human life of ours from the evolution of animal life in general.<sup>2</sup> Equally little is there any warrant for separating the evolution of living matter from the evolution of what we call inanimate matter, not to speak of the initial difficulty of accounting for things like energy and radio-active matter, and the evolution and the devolution that are calmly claimed by science to be involved in the various "systems" within the universe — apart from an ordering and intelligent mind and will. There is therefore, so far, no necessary presumption against the idea of regarding human evolution as at least in some sense a continuation or development of the life that seems to pervade the uni-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> So much may, I suppose, be inferred from the contentions (explicit and implicit) of all biologists and evolutionists. Human life they all seem to regard as a kind of continuity or development of the life of universal nature, whether their theory of the origin of life be that of (1) "spontaneous generation," (2) "cosmozoa" (germs capable of life scattered throughout space), (3) "Preyer's theory of the continuity of life," (4) "Pfüger's theory of the chemical characteristics of proteid," or (5) the conclusion of Verworn himself, "that existing organisms are derived in uninterrupted descent from the first living substance that originated from lifeless substance" (*General Physiology*, p. 315).

verse in general. And then, secondly, there is the familiar reflection that nearly all that we think we know about the universe as a whole is but an interpretation of it in terms of the life and the energy that we experience in ourselves and in terms of some of the apparent conditions of this life and this energy. For as Bergson reminds us, "As thinking beings we may apply the laws of our physics to our world, and extend them to each of the worlds taken separately, but nothing tells us that they apply to the entire universe nor even that such affirmation has any meaning; for the universe is *not made* but is *being made continually*. It is growing perhaps indefinitely by the addition of new worlds."<sup>1</sup>

On the ground, then, both of science and of philosophy<sup>2</sup> may it be definitely said that this human action of ours, as apparently, the highest outcome of the forces of nature, becomes only too

<sup>1</sup> *Creative Evolution*, pp. 245-5.

<sup>2</sup> It is, I think, an important reflection that it is precisely in this very reality of "action" that science and philosophy come together. That all the sciences meet in the concept, or the fact, of action is, of course, quite evident from the new knowledge of the new physics. Professor M'Dougall has recently brought psychology into line with the natural sciences by defining its subject-matter as the actions or the "behaviour" of human beings and animals. And it is surely not difficult to see that—as I try to indicate—it is in human behaviour that philosophy and science come together. Another consideration in respect of the philosophy of action that has long impressed me is this. If there is one realm in which, more than anywhere else, our traditional rationalism and our traditional empiricism really came together in England, it is the realm of social philosophy, the realm of human activity. It was the breaking down of the entire philosophy of sensations in the matter of the proof of utilitarianism that caused John Stuart Mill to take up the "social philosophy" in respect to which the followers of positivism joined hands with the idealists.



naturally and only too inevitably the highest object of our reflective consideration. As Schopenhauer put it long ago, the human body is the only object in nature that we know "on the inside." And do or think what we will, it is this human life of ours and this mind of ours that have peopled the world of science and the world of philosophy with all the categories and all the distinctions that obtain there, with concepts like the " (Platonic) Ideas," "form," "matter," "energy," "ether," "atom," "substance," "the individual," "the universal," "empty space," "eternity," "the Absolute," "value," "final end," and so on.

There is much doubtless in this action philosophy, and much too in the matter of the reasons that may be brought forward in its support, that can become credible and intelligible only as we proceed. But it must all count, it would seem, in support of the idea of the pragmatist rediscovery, for philosophy, of the importance of our creative action and of our creative thought. And then there are one or two additional general considerations of which we may well think in the same connexion.

Pragmatism boasts, as we know, of being a highly democratic<sup>1</sup> doctrine, of contending for the emancipation of the individual and his interests from the tyranny of all kinds of absolutism, and all kinds of dogmatism (whether philosophical, or scientific, or social).

<sup>1</sup> See p. 185.

No system either of thought or of practice, no supposed "world-view" of things, no body of scientific laws or abstract truths shall, as long as it holds the field of our attention, entirely crush out of existence the concrete interests and the free self-development of the individual human being.

A tendency in this direction exists, it must be admitted, in the "determinism" both of natural science and of Hegelianism, and of the social philosophy that has emanated from the one or from the other. Pragmatism, on the contrary, in all matters of the supposed determination, or the attempted limitation, of the individual by what has been accomplished either in Nature or in human history, would incline to what we generally speak of to-day as a "modernistic," or a "liberalistic," or even a "revolutionary," attitude. It would reinterpret and reconstruct, in the light of the present and its needs, not only the concepts and the methods of science and philosophy, but also the various institutions and the various social practices of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly Pragmatism would protest, as does the newer education and the newer sociology, against any merely *doctrinaire* (or "intellectualistic") conception of education and culture, substituting in its place the "efficiency" or the "social service"<sup>2</sup> conception. And even if we must admit that this more or less practical ideal of education has been over-emphasized in

<sup>1</sup> See p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter VII. p. 179.

our time, it is still true, as with Goethe, that it is only the "actively-free" man, the man who can work out in service and true accomplishment the ideal of human life, whose production should be regarded as the aim of a sound educational or social policy.

We shall later attempt to assign some definite reasons for the failure of Pragmatism to make the most of all this apparently justifiable insistence upon action and upon the creative activity of the individual, along with all this sympathy that it seems to evince for a progressive and a liberationist view of human policy.

Meantime, in view of all these considerations, we cannot avoid making the reflection that it is surely something of an anomaly in philosophy that a thinker's "study" doubts about his actions and about some of the main instinctive beliefs of mankind (in which he himself shares) should have come to be regarded—as they have been by Rationalism—as considerations of a greater importance than the actions, and the beliefs, and the realities, of which they are the expression. Far be it from the writer to suggest that the suspension of judgment and the refraining from activity,<sup>1</sup> in the absence of adequate reason and motive, are not, and have not been of the greatest value to mankind in the matter of the development of the higher faculties

<sup>1</sup> I am thinking of Pyrrho and Arcesilaus and some of the Greek sceptics and of their *εποχή* and *ἀραξαίλα*.

and the higher ideals of the mind. There may well be, however, for Pragmatism, or for any philosophy that can work it out satisfactorily, in the free, creative, activity of man, in the duty that lies upon us all of carrying on our lives to the highest expression, a reason and a truth that must be estimated at their logical worth along with the many other reasons and truths of which we are pleased to think as the truth of things.

Short, however, of a more genuine attempt on the part of Pragmatism than anything it has as yet given us in this connexion to justify this higher reason and truth that are embodied in our consciousness of ourselves as persons, as *rational agents*, all its mere "practicalism" and all its "instrumentalism" are but the workaday and the utilitarian philosophy of which we have already complained in its earlier and cruder professions.<sup>1</sup>

After some attention, then, to the matter of the outstanding critical defects of Pragmatism, in its preliminary and cruder forms, we shall again return to our topic of the relatively new subject-matter it has been endeavouring to place before philosophy in its insistence upon the importance of action, and upon the need of a "dynamic," instead of an intellectualistic and "spectator-like" theory of human personality.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 26.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IV

## PHILOSOPHY AND THE ACTIVITY-EXPERIENCE

[IN an article upon the above title in the *International Journal of Ethics*, p. 1898, I attempted to deal with some aspects of the problem that I have just raised in the preceding chapter. I venture to append here some of the statements that I made then upon the importance of action and the "activity-experience" to the philosophy of to-day. I am inclined to regard them (although I have not looked at them until the present moment of passing this book through the press) as a kind of anticipation and confirmation of many of my present pages. Part of my excuse, however, for inserting them here is a hope that these references and suggestions may possibly be of service to the general reader. The extracts follow as they were printed.]

I. It requires no very profound acquaintance with the trend of the literature of general and specialized philosophy of the last twenty-five years to detect a decidedly practical turn in the recent speculative tendencies of philosophy and philosophers. The older conception of philosophy or metaphysics as an attempt to state (more or less systematically) the value of the world for thought is being slowly modified, if not altogether disappearing, into the attempt to explain or to grasp the significance of the world from the stand-point of the moral and social activity of man. The philosophical student must be to some extent conscious of the difference in respect of both tone and subject-matter between such books as Stirling's *Secret of Hegel*, E. Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant* (the first editions of both works), Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics*, and the most recent essays and books of Professors A. Seth<sup>1</sup> and James<sup>2</sup> and Ward<sup>3</sup> and Sidgwick<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, a book consisting of essays and reviews published by the author during the last four or five years. They all advocate "humanism in opposition to naturalism," or "ethicism in opposition to a too narrow intellectualism."

<sup>2</sup> *The Will to Believe*, 1897.

<sup>3</sup> "Progress in Philosophy," art. *Mind*, 15, p. 213.

<sup>4</sup> *Practical Ethics*; Essays.

Baldwin,<sup>1</sup> and of Mr. Bosanquet<sup>2</sup> and the late Mr. Nettleship,<sup>3</sup> and between—to turn to Germany—the writings of Erdmann and Kuno Fischer and Zeller and F. A. Lange, and those of Gizycki, Paulsen, Windelband, Eucken, Hartmann, Deussen, Simmel, and—in France—between the writings of Renouvier and Pilon and Ravaisson, the “Neo-Kantianism” of the *Critique Philosophique* (1872–1877), and those of Fouillée, Weber (of Strassburg), Séailles, Dunan, and others, and of general writers like de Vogüé, Desjardins, and Brunetière, and of social philosophers like Bouglé, Tarde, Izoulet, and so on. The change of *venue* in these writers alone, not to speak of the change of the interest of the educated world from such books as Huxley's *Hume* and Renan's *L'Avenir de la Science* and Du Bois Reymond's *Die Sieben Welträthsel*, and Tyndall's *Belfast Address*, to the writings of Herbert Spencer (the Sociology and the general essays on social evolution), Kidd, Nordau, Nietzsche, Mr. Crozier (his important *History of Civilization*), and Demolins,<sup>4</sup> and the predominance of investigations into general biology and comparative psychology and sociology over merely logical and conceptual philosophy seem to afford us some warrant for trying to think of what might be called a newer or ethical idealism, an idealism of the will, an idealism of life, in

<sup>1</sup> *Mental Development—Social and Ethical Interpretations* (a work crowned by the Royal Academy of Denmark). We can see in this book how a psychologist has been led into a far-reaching study of social and ethical development in order to gain an understanding of the growth of even the individual mind. We may indeed say that the individualistic intellectualism of the older psychology is now no more. It was too “abstract” a way of looking at mind. Professor Royce, it is well known, has given, from the stand-point of a professed metaphysician, a cordial welcome to the work of Professor Baldwin. In an important review of Mr. Stout's two admirable volumes on *Analytic Psychology* (*Mind*, July, 1897), Professor Royce has insisted strongly upon the need of supplementing introspection by the “interpretation of the reports and the conduct of other people” if we would know much about “dynamic” psychology. It is this “dynamic” psychology—the “dynamics” of the will and of the “feelings”—that I think constitutes such an important advance upon the traditional “intellectual” and “individualistic” psychology.

<sup>2</sup> *The Psychology of the Moral Self*. Macmillan, 1897. I have tried, in a short notice of this book in the *Philosophical Review* (March, 1898), to indicate the importance of some of its chief contentions.

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophical Lectures and Remains*, edited by Professor Bradley.

<sup>4</sup> Editor of *La Science Sociale*. His recent work on the *Superiority of the Anglo-Saxons* (*A quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?*)—a chapter in the study of the conditions of race survival—ran through seventeen editions in a few months, and set the whole press of France and Germany (other countries following suit) into commotion, as well as calling forth *pronunciamientos* from most of the prominent editors and critics of France,—men like Jules Lemaitre, Paul Bourget, Marcel Prevost, François Coppée, Édouard Rod, G. Valbert, etc.



contradistinction to the older or intellectual (epistemological, Neo-Kantian) idealism, the idealism of the intellect. Professor A. Seth,<sup>1</sup> in his recent volume on *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, suggests that Mr. Bradley's treatise on *Appearance and Reality* has closed the period of the absorption or assimilation of Kanto-Hegelian principles by the English mind. And there is ample evidence in contemporary philosophical literature to show that even the very men who have, with the help of Stirling and Green and Caird and Bradley and Wallace, "absorbed and assimilated" the principles of critical idealism are now bent upon applying these principles to the solution of concrete problems of art and life and conduct. Two things alone would constitute a difference between the philosophy of the last few years and that of the preceding generation: An attempt (strongly<sup>2</sup> accentuated at the present moment) to include elements of *feeling* and *will* in our final consciousness of reality, and a tendency (inevitable since Comte and Hegel's *Philosophy of History*) to extend the philosophical synthesis of the merely "external," or physical, universe so as to make it include the world of man's action and the world that is now glibly called the "social organism."<sup>3</sup> A good deal of the epistemological and

<sup>1</sup> Now Professor A. Seth Pringle-Pattison.

<sup>2</sup> In different ways by all of the following English writers: Professor A. Seth ("It is not in knowledge, then, as such, but in feeling and action that reality is given," *Man's Place*, etc., p. 122, etc. etc.), by Mr. Bradley (*Appearance and Reality*), by Mr. Balfour (in his *Foundations of Belief*), and by Professor James. Professor Eucken, of Jena, in his different books, also insists strongly upon the idea that it is not in knowledge as such, but in the totality of our psychical experience that the principles of philosophy must be sought. Paulsen, in his *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, and Weber, in his *History of Philosophy* (books in general use to-day), both advocate a kind of philosophy of the will, the idea that the world is to be regarded as a striving on the part of wills after a partly unconscious ideal. Simmel, in an important article in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, IV. 2, expresses the idea (which it would be well to recognize generally at the present time) that truth is not something objectively apart from us, but rather the name we give to conceptions that have proved to be the guides to useful actions, and so become part of the psychical heritage of human beings. Professor Ribot, of Paris, has written more extensively upon the will and the feelings than upon the intellect,—a fact in keeping with the scientific demands of our day.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., an article by Fouillée in the *Revue Philosophique*, XXI. 5, with the very title "Nécessité d'une interprétation psychologique et sociologique du monde." Fouillée finds there, as he does elsewhere, that will is the principle that enables us to unify the physical with the psychical world,—an illustration of the fact that the two characteristics I am referring to are really one. A present instance of the introduction of the element of will (the will of man, even) is to be seen in the contention of such a book as M. Lucien Arréat's *Les Croyances de*

metaphysical philosophy of this century has been merely cosmological, and at best psychological and individualistic. The philosophy of the present is, necessarily, to a large extent, sociological and collectivistic and historical. Renan once prophesied that this would be so. And many other men perceived the same fact and acted upon their perception of it—Goethe and Victor Hugo and Carlyle, for example.

To be sure, any attempt to draw lines of novel and absolute separation between writers of to-day and their immediate predecessors would be absurd and impossible, just as would be the attempt to force men who are still living and thinking and developing, into Procrustean beds of system and nomenclature. The history of the philosophy of the last half of this century constitutes a development as continuous and as logical as the philosophy of any similar period of years wherein men have thought persistently and truly upon the problems of life and mind. There were in the 'sixties men like Ulrich and Lotze (Renouvier, too, to some extent) who divined the limitations of a merely intellectual philosophy, and who saw clearly that the only way to effect a reconciliation between philosophy and science would be to apply philosophy itself to the problems of the life and thought of the time, just as we find, in 1893, Dr. Edward Caird writing, in his *Essays on Literature and Philosophy*, that "philosophy, in face of the increasing complexity of modern life, has a harder task laid upon it than ever was laid upon it before. It must emerge from the region of abstract principles and show itself able to deal with the manifold results of empirical science, giving to each of them its proper place and value." Professor Campbell Fraser, while welcoming and sympathetically referring to (in his books upon Berkeley and Locke) the elements of positive value in English and German idealism, has throughout his life contended for the idea (expressed with greatest definiteness in his Gifford Lectures on *The Philosophy of Theism*) that "in man, as a self-conscious and self-determining agent," is to be found the "best key we possess to the solution of the ultimate problem of the universe"; while Professor Sidgwick, by virtue of his captivating and ingenious pertinacity in confining philosophical speculation to the lines of the traditional English empiricism, and in keeping it free from the ensnaring subtleties of system and methodology, has exercised a healthful and corrective influence against the extremes alike of transcendentalism and naturalism. And it would

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*Demain* (1898). According to *Mind*, M. Arréat proposes to substitute the idea that man can by his efforts bring about the supremacy of justice for the traditional idea that justice reigns in the universe.

be rash to maintain that all the younger men in philosophy show an intention to act upon the idea (expressed by Wundt, for instance, in his *Ethik*) that a metaphysic should build upon the facts of the moral life of man; although we find a "Neo-Hegelian" like Professor Mackenzie<sup>1</sup> saying that "even the wealth of our inner life depends rather on the width of our objective interests than on the intensity of our self-contemplation"; and an expounder of the ethics of dialectic evolution like Professor Muirhead quoting<sup>2</sup> with approval the thought expressed by George Eliot in the words, "The great world-struggle of developing thought is continually foreshadowed in the struggle of the affections seeking a justification for love and hope"; and a careful psychologist like Mr. Stout<sup>3</sup> deliberately penning the words,<sup>4</sup> "Our existence as conscious beings is essentially an activity, and activity is a process which, by its very nature, is directed towards an end, and can neither exist nor be conceived apart from this end." There are, doubtless, many philosophers of to-day who are convinced that philosophy is purely an intellectual matter, and can never be anything else than an attempt to analyze the world for *thought*—an attempt to state its value in the terms of thought. Against all these and many similar considerations it would be idle to set up a hard and fast codification or characterization of the work of the philosophy or philosophers of to-day. Still, the world will accord the name of philosopher to any man—Renan, for example, or Spencer or Huxley or Nordau or Nietzsche—who comes before it with views upon the universe and humanity that may, for any conceivable reason, be regarded as fundamental. And on this showing of things, as well as from many indications in the work of those who are philosophers by profession, it may be said that the predominating note of the newer philosophy is its openness to the facts of the volitional and emotional and moral and social aspects of man's life, as things that take us further along the path of truth than the mere categories of thought and their manipulation by metaphysic and epistemology.

II. The Newer Idealism does not dream of questioning the positive work of the Kantian and Neo-Kantian and Neo-Hegelian idealists. It knows only too well that even scientific men like

<sup>1</sup> *Manual of Ethics*, according to Mr. Stout, *International Journal of Ethics*, October 1894. There are many similar sentences and ideas in the book.

<sup>2</sup> *Elements of Ethics*, p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> Now Professor of Logic in St. Andrews.

<sup>4</sup> *International Journal of Ethics*, October 1894, p. 119.

Helmholtz and Du Bois Reymond, that "positive" philosophers like Riehl and Laas and Feuerbach and others have, through the influence of the Kantian philosophy, learned and accepted the fact of there being "ideal" or psychical or "mind-supplied" factors in so-called external reality. There are among the educated men of to-day very few Dr. Johnsons who ridicule the psycho-physical, or the metaphysical, analysis of external reality, who believe in a crass and crude and self-sufficient "matter" utterly devoid of psychical attributes or characteristics. True, Herbert Spencer has written words to the effect that "If the Idealist (Berkeley) is right, then the doctrine of Evolution is a dream"; but then everything in Spencer's philosophy about an "actuality lying behind appearances" and about our being compelled "to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation of some Power by which we are acted upon," is against the possibility of our believing that, according to that philosophy, an unconscious and non-spiritual "matter" could evolve itself into conscious life and moral experience. The philosophers of to-day have indeed rejoiced to see Kant's lesson popularized by such various phases and movements of human thought as psycho-physical research, art and æsthetic theory, the interest in Buddhism (with its idealistic theory of the knowledge of the senses), and the speculative biology of Weismann and others. That people generally should see that matter is, for many reasons, something more than mere matter, is to the student of Kant a piece of fulfilled prophecy. And by a plea for a return to reality and life and sociability from conceptualism and criticism and speculative individualism no philosophical scholar for one moment contemplates, as even conceivable, an overlooking of the idealistic interpretation of the data of the senses supplied by Locke and Berkeley and Hume, or of the idealistic interpretation of the data of science and understanding supplied by Kant's "Copernican" discovery. Any real view of the universe must now presuppose the melting down of crass external reality into the phenomena of sense and experience and the transformation of inorganic and organic nature into so many *planes* or *grades* of being expressive of the different forms (gravitation, cohesion, vital force, psychic force) in which cosmic energy manifests itself.

Equally little does the Newer Idealism question the legitimacy or the actual positive service of the "dialectic" of Hegel (as Archimedean a leverage to humanity as was the "concept" of Socrates or the "apperception" of Kant) that has shown the world to be a *system* in which everything is related to everything else, and shown, too, that all ways of looking at reality that stop

short of the truths of personality and moral relationship are untrue and inadequate. To use the words of Professor Howison, of California, in the preface to the first edition of Professor Watson's<sup>1</sup> latest volume (a book that connects the idealism of Glasgow and Oxford with the convictions of the youth of the "Pacific Coast"), the "*dominant tone*" of the militant and representative philosophy of to-day, is "affirmative and idealistic. The decided majority . . . are animated by the conviction that human thought is able to solve the riddle of life positively ; to solve it in accord with the ideal hopes and interests of human nature."

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<sup>1</sup> I think that I must here have meant Professor Watson's *Christianity and Idealism*.

## CHAPTER V

### CRITICAL

ENOUGH has perhaps now been said by way of an indication of some of the main characteristics of Pragmatism, and of the matter of its relations to ordinary and to philosophical thinking. Its complexity and some of its confusions and some of its difficulties have also been referred to.

As for the affiliations and the associations of Pragmatism, it would seem that it rests not so much upon its own mere instrumentalism and practicalism as upon some of the many broader and deeper tendencies in ancient and modern thought that have aimed at a dynamic, instead of a static, interpretation of reality.

We have suggested, too, that there are evidently things in traditional philosophy and in Rationalism of which it fails to take cognizance, although it has evidently many things to give to Rationalism in the way of a constructive philosophy of human life.

Now it would be easily possible to continue our study of Pragmatism along some or all of those different lines and points of view. In the matter,



for example, of the affiliations and associations of Pragmatism, we could show that, in addition to such things as the "nominalism" and the utilitarianism, and the positivism, and the "voluntarism" and the philosophy of hypotheses, and the "anti-intellectualism" already referred to, Pragmatism has an affinity with things as far apart and as different as the Scottish Philosophy of Common-sense, the sociological philosophy of Comte and his followers, the philosophy of Fichte with its great idea of the world as the "sensualized sphere" of our duty, the "experience" philosophy of Bacon and of the entire modern era, and so on. There is even a "romantic" element in Pragmatism, and it has, in fact, been called "romantic utilitarianism."<sup>1</sup> We can understand this if we think of M. Berthelot's<sup>2</sup> association of it not only

<sup>1</sup> And apart from the idealism and the ethical philosophy of which I speak, in the next chapter, as necessary to convert Pragmatism into the Humanism it would like to become, Pragmatism is really a kind of romanticism, the reaction of a personal enthusiasm against the abstractions of a classical rationalism in philosophy. There is an element of this romanticism in James's heroic philosophy of life, although I would prefer to be the last man in the world to talk against this heroic romanticism in any one. It is the great want of our time, and it is the thing that is prized most in some of the men whom this ephemeral age of ours still delights to honour. It was exhibited both in Browning and in George Meredith, for example. Of the former Mr. Chesterton writes in his trenchant, clean-sweeping little book on *The Victorian Age in Literature*, p. 175: "What he really was was a romantic. He offered the cosmos as an adventure rather than a scheme." The same thing could be said about James's "Will to Believe" Philosophy. Meredith, although far less of an idealist than Browning, was also an optimist by temperament rather than by knowledge or by conviction—hence the elevation of his tone and style in spite of his belated naturalism.

<sup>2</sup> In *Un Romantisme utilitaire* (Paris, Alcan, 1911), chiefly a study of the Pragmatism of Nietzsche and Poincaré.

with Poincaré, but with Nietzsche, or of Dr. Schiller's famous declaration that the genius of a man's logical method should be loved and revered by him as is "his bride."

And there is always in it, to be sure, the important element of sympathy with the religious instincts of mankind. And this is the case, too, whether these instincts are contemplated in some of the forms to which reference has already been made, or in the form, say, expressed by such a typical modern thinker as the late Henry Sidgwick, in his conviction that "Humanity will not, and cannot, acquiesce in a Godless world."<sup>1</sup>

Then again we might take up the point of the relations of Pragmatism to doctrines new and old in the history of philosophy, to the main points of departure of different schools of thought, or to fundamental and important positions in many of the great philosophers. The writer finds that he has noticed in this connexion the doctrines of Stoicism and Epicureanism,<sup>2</sup> the "probability"

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for this saying of one of my old teachers to Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, in his essay upon Sidgwick in that judicious and interesting book upon the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, *In Peril of Change*.

<sup>2</sup> Stoicism and Epicureanism, as the matter is generally put, both substitute the practical good of man as an individual for the wisdom or the theoretical perfection that were contemplated by Plato and Aristotle as the highest objects of human pursuit. For Cicero, too, the chief problems of philosophy were in the main practical, the question whether virtue alone is sufficient for happiness, the problem of practical certainty as opposed to scepticism, the general belief in Providence and in immortality, and so on. And Lucretius thinks of the main service of philosophy as consisting in its power of emancipating the human mind from superstition. All this is quite typical of the essentially

philosophy of Locke<sup>1</sup> and Butler, and Pascal, the ethics and the natural theology of Cicero, the "voluntarism" of Schopenhauer,<sup>2</sup> Aristotle's philosophy of the Practical Reason,<sup>3</sup> Kant's philosophy of the same, the religious philosophy of theologians like Tertullian, Augustine, Duns Scotus, and so on—to take only a few instances.<sup>4</sup> The

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practical nature of the Roman character, of its conception of education as in the main discipline and duty, of its distrust of Greek intellectualism, and of its preoccupation with the necessities of the struggle for existence and for government, of its lack of leisure, and so on. I do not think that the very first thing about Pragmatism is its desire to return to a practical conception of life, although a tendency in this direction doubtless exists in it.

<sup>1</sup> The idea that our "demonstrable knowledge is very short, if indeed we have any at all, although our certainty is as great as our happiness, beyond which we have no concernment to know or to be" (*Essay*, iv. 2-14); or Locke's words: "I have always thought the actions of men the best interpreters of their thoughts."

<sup>2</sup> Schopenhauer, for example, used to be fond of repeating that his own philosophy (which took will to be the fundamental reality) was on its very face necessarily more of an ethic than a system like that of Spinoza, for example, which could only be called an ethic by a sort of *lucus a non lucendo*.

<sup>3</sup> The Practical Reason to Aristotle is the reason that has to do with the pursuit of aims and ends, in distinction from the reason that has to do with knowledge, and the "universal" and science. This twofold distinction has given many problems to his students and to his commentators, and to succeeding generations. It is responsible for the entire mediæval and Renaissance separation of the intellectual life and the intellectual virtues from the practical life and the practical virtues.

<sup>4</sup> It might be added here that Logic has always recognized the validity, to some extent, of the argument "from consequences" of which Pragmatism makes so much. The form of argumentation that it calls the Dilemma is a proof of this statement. A chain of reasoning that leads to impossible consequences, or that leads to consequences inconsistent with previously admitted truths, is necessarily unsound. That this test of tenable or untenable consequences has often been used in philosophy in the large sense of the term must be known only too well to the well-informed reader. As Sidgwick says in his *Method of Ethics*: "The truth of a philosopher's premises will always

view of man and his nature represented by all these names is, in the main, an essentially practical, a concrete, and a moral view as opposed to an abstract and a rationalistic view. And of course even to Plato knowledge was only an element in the total spiritual philosophy of man, while his master, Socrates, never really seemed to make any separation between moral and intellectual inquiries.

And as for positions in the great philosophers between which and some of the tendencies of Pragmatism there is more than a merely superficial agreement, we might instance, for example, the tendency of Hume<sup>1</sup> to reduce many of the leading categories of our thought to mere habits of mind, to be explained on an instinctive rather than a rationalistic basis; or Comte's idea of the error of separating reason from instinct;<sup>2</sup> or the idea of de Maistre and Bain, and many others that "will" is implied in the notion of "exteriority";

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be tested by the acceptability of his conclusions; if in any important point he is found in flagrant conflict with common opinion, his method will be declared invalid." Reid used the argument from consequences in his examination of the sceptical philosophy of Hume. It is used with effect in Mr. Arthur Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* in regard to the supposed naturalism of physical science. Edmund Burke applied it to some extent to political theories, or to the abstract philosophical theories upon which some of them were supposedly based.

<sup>1</sup> Pragmatism has been called by some critics a "new-Humism" on the ground of its tendency to do this very thing that is mentioned here in respect of Hume. But the justice or the injustice of this appellation is a very large question, into which it is needless for us to enter here.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Intelligence is the aptitude to modify conduct in conformity to the circumstances of each case" (*The Positive Philosophy*, Martineau, i. 465).

or the idea of Descartes<sup>1</sup> that the senses teach us not so much "what is in reality in things," as "what is beneficial<sup>2</sup> or hurtful to the composite whole of mind and body"; or the declaration of Kant that the chief end of metaphysic is God and immortality; or the idea of Spencer<sup>3</sup> that the belief in the unqualified supremacy of reason is a superstition of philosophers; or the idea of Plato in the Sophist<sup>4</sup> that reality is the capacity for acting or of being acted upon; and so on.

As for such further confirmation of pragmatist teaching as is to be found in typical modern thinking and scholars, thought of almost at random, it would be easy to quote in this connexion from writers as diverse as Höffding, Fouillée, Simmel, Wundt, Mach, Huxley, Hobhouse, and many others. It might be called a typically pragmatist idea, for example, on the part of Mr. L. T. Hobhouse to hold that "The higher conceptions by which idealism has so firmly held are not to be 'scientifically' treated in the sense of being explained away. What is genuinely higher

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Philosophy*, Part II. iii. It is also an eminently pragmatist idea on the part of Descartes to hold that "I should find much more truth in the reasoning of each individual with reference to the affairs in which he is personally interested, and the issue of which must presently punish him if he has judged amiss, than in those conducted by a man of letters in his study, regarding speculative matters that are of no practical moment" (*Method*, Veitch's edition, p. 10).

<sup>2</sup> *Principles of Philosophy*, Part II. iii. p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> See *Principles of Psychology*, ch. ii., "Assumption of Metaphysicians," and also elsewhere in his Essays.

<sup>4</sup> "Any power of doing or suffering in a degree however slight was held by us to be the definition of existence" (Sophist, Jowett's *Plato*, iv. p. 465).

we have . . . good reason to think must also be truest," and we "cannot permanently acquiesce in a way of thinking what would resolve it into what is lowest."<sup>1</sup> These last words represent almost a commonplace of the thought of the day. It is held, for example, by men as different and as far apart in their work, and yet as typical of phases of our modern life, as Robert Browning and Sir Oliver Lodge. The close dependence again of the doctrines of any science upon the social life and the prevalent thought of the generation is also essentially a pragmatist idea. Its truth is recognized and insisted upon in the most explicit manner in the recent serviceable manifesto of Professors Geddes and Thomson upon "Evolution,"<sup>2</sup> and it obviously affects their whole philosophy of life and mind. It figures too quite prominently in the valuable short *Introduction to Science* by Professor Thomson in the same series of manuals.

Another typical book of to-day, again (that of Professor Duncan on the *New Knowledge* of the new physical science), definitely gives up, for example, the "correspondence"<sup>3</sup> notion of truth, holding that it is meaningless to think of reality as some-

<sup>1</sup> *The Theory of Knowledge*, Preface, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> "The independence of the doctrines of any science from the social life, the prevalent thought of the generation in which they arise, is indeed a fiction, a superstition of the scientist which we would fain shatter beyond all repair; but the science becomes all the sounder for recognizing its origins and its resources, its present limitations and its need of fresh light from other minds, from different social moulds" (pp. 215-216).

<sup>3</sup> See p. 81.



thing outside our thought and our experience of which our ideas might be a possible duplicate. This again we readily recognize as an essentially pragmatist contention. So also is the same writer's rejection of the notion of "absolute truth,"<sup>1</sup> and his confession of the "faith" that is always involved in the thought of completeness or system in our scientific knowledge. "We believe purely as an act of faith and not at all of logic," he says, "that the universe is essentially determinable thousands of years hence, into some one system which will account for everything and which will be the truth."<sup>2</sup>

Nor would it be at all difficult to find confirmation for the pragmatist philosophy of ideas and thoughts in what we may well think of as the general reflective literature of our time, outside the sphere, as it were, of strictly rational or academic philosophy—in writers like F. D. Maurice, W. Pater, A. W. Benn (who otherwise depreciates what he calls "*ophelism*"), J. H. Newman, Karl Pearson, Carlyle, and others.<sup>3</sup> Take the following,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Knowledge*, p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> It would indeed be easy to quote from popular writers of the day, like Mr. Chesterton or Mr. A. C. Benson or Mr. H. G. Wells, to show that a knowledge of the existence of Pragmatism as a newer experimental or "sociological" philosophy is now a commonplace of the day. Take the following, for example, from Mr. Wells's *Marriage* (p. 521): "It was to be a pragmatist essay, a sustained attempt to undermine the confidence of all that scholastic logic-chopping which still lingers like the *sequelae* of a disease in our University philosophy . . . a huge criticism and cleaning up of the existing methods of formulation as a preliminary to the wider and freer discussion of those religious and social issues our generation still shrinks from." "It is grotesque," he said, "and utterly

for example, quoted with approval from Herschel by Karl Pearson: "The grand and indeed the only character of truth is its capability of enduring the test of universal experience, and coming unchanged out of every possible form of fair discussion."<sup>1</sup> The idea again, for example, recently expressed in a public article by such a widely read and cleverly perverse writer as Mr. Bernard Shaw,<sup>2</sup> that "the will that moves us is dogmatic: our brain is only the very imperfect instrument by which we devise practical means for satisfying the will," might only too naturally be associated with the pragmatist-like anti-intellectualism<sup>3</sup> of Bergson, or, for that part of it, with the deeper "voluntarism" of Schopenhauer. The following quotation taken from Mr. Pater reveals how great may be correspondence between the independent findings of a finely sensitive mind like his, and the positions to which the pragmatists are inclined in respect of the psychology of religious belief. "The supposed facts on which Christianity rests, utterly incapable as they have become of any ordinary test, seem to me matter of very much the same sort of assent as we give to any assumption in the strict and ultimate sense, moral. The question whether these facts were real will, I think, always continue to be what I should call one of those

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true that the sanity and happiness of all the world lies in its habits of generalization."

<sup>1</sup> I cannot meantime trace, or place, this quotation, although I remember copying it out of something by Karl Pearson.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Literary Digest* for 1911.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 234.

*natural* questions of the human mind.”<sup>1</sup> Readers of Carlyle will easily recognize what we might call a more generalized statement of this same truth of Pater’s in the often-quoted words from *Heroes and Hero-Worship*:<sup>2</sup> “By religion I do not mean the church creed which a man professes, the articles of faith which . . . . But the thing a man does practically believe (and this often enough *without* asserting it even to himself, much less to others); the thing a man does practically lay to heart and know for certain concerning his vital relations to the mysterious universe, and his duty and destiny there.” It has long seemed to the writer that a similar thing to this might be written (and James has certainly written it) about a man’s “philosophy” as necessarily inclusive of his working beliefs as well as of his mere reasoned opinions, although it is the latter that are generally (by what right?) taken to be properly the subject-matter of philosophy.<sup>3</sup> And it is this phase of the pragmatist philosophy that could, I am inclined to think, be most readily illustrated from the opinions of various living and dead writers upon the general working philosophy of human nature as we find this revealed in human history. We are told, for example, by Mr. Hobhouse, in his monumental work upon *Morals in Evolution*, that in “Taoism the supreme principle of things may

<sup>1</sup> From a letter to Mrs. Humphry Ward, quoted in A. C. Benson’s *Walter Pater*, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> Lecture I. towards the beginning.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 62 and p. 197. It should be remembered that our reasoned opinions rest upon our working beliefs.

be left undefined as something that we experience in ourselves if we throw ourselves upon it, but which we know rather by following or living it than by any process of ratiocination."<sup>1</sup> And "this mystical interpretation," he adds, "is not confined to Taoism, but in one form or another lies near to hand to all spiritual religions, and expresses one mode of religious consciousness, its aspiration to reach the heart of things and the confidence that it has done so, and found rest there."

We are reminded, of course, by all such considerations of the philosophy of Bergson, and of its brilliant attempt to make a synthesis of intuition or instinct with reflection or thought, and indeed it may well be that the past difficulties of philosophy with intuition and instinct are due to the fact of its error in unduly separating the intellect from the "will to live," and from the "creative" evolution that have been such integral factors in the evolution of the life of humanity.

This entire matter, however, of the comparison of pragmatist doctrines to typical tendencies in the thought of the past and the present must be treated by us as subordinate to our main purpose, that of the estimation of the place of Pragmatism in the constructive thought of the present time. With a view to this it will be necessary to revert to the criticism of Pragmatism.

The criticism that has already been made is

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 86.

that in the main Pragmatism is unsystematic and complex and confusing, that it has no adequate theory of "reality," and no unified theory of philosophy, that it has no satisfactory criterion of the "consequences" by which it proposes to test truth, and that it has not worked out its philosophy of the contribution of the individual with his "activity" and his "purposes" to "reality" generally, and that it is in danger of being a failure in the realm of ethics.<sup>1</sup>

To all this we shall now seek to add a few words more upon (1) the pragmatist criterion of truth, (2) the weakness of Pragmatism in the realms of logic and theory of knowledge, (3) its failure to give consistent account of the nature of reality, and (4) its unsatisfactoriness in the realm of ethics.

(1) We have already expressed our agreement with the finding of Professor Pratt<sup>2</sup> that the pragmatist theory of truth amounts to no more than the harmless doctrine that the meaning of any conception expresses itself in the past, present, or future conduct or experiences of actual, or possible, sentient creatures. Taken literally, however, the doctrine that truth should be tested by consequences is not only harmless but also useless, seeing that Omniscience alone could bring together in thought or in imagination all the consequences of an assertion. Again, it is literally *false* for the

<sup>1</sup> See the reference in Chapter II. p. 26 to the opportunistic ethic of Prezzolini.

<sup>2</sup> In *What is Pragmatism?* Macmillan & Co.

reason that the proof of truth is not in the first instance any kind of "consequences," not even the "verification" of which pragmatists are so fond. If the truth of which we may happen to be thinking is truth of "fact," its proof lies in its correspondence (despite the difficulties<sup>1</sup> of the idea) with the results of observation or perception.<sup>2</sup> And if it be inferential truth, its proof is that of its deduction from previously established truths, or facts, upon a certain plane of knowledge or experience. In short, Pragmatists forget altogether the logical doctrine of the existence (in the world of our human experience, of course) of different established planes of reality, or planes of ascertained knowledge in which all propositions that are not nonsensical or trivial, are, from their very inception, regarded as necessarily true or false. The existence of these various planes of experience or of thought is in fact implied in the pragmatist doctrine of the fundamental character of belief.<sup>3</sup> According to this perfectly correct doctrine, the objectivity of truth (*i.e.* its reality or non-reality in the world of fact or in the world of rational discourse) is the essential thing about it, while the idea of its "consequences" is not. A truth is a proposition whose validity has already been established by evidence or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Pratt makes an attempt in his book on *What is Pragmatism?* (pp. 75-6-7) to show that the true meaning of the "correspondence theory" is not inconsistent with Pragmatism or that Pragmatism is not inconsistent with this truth.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 64.



by demonstration. It has then afterwards the immediate "utility" of expressing in an intelligible and convenient manner the fact of certain connexions among things or events. And its ultimate utility to mankind is also at the same time assured, humanity being by its very nature a society of persons who must act, and who act, upon what they believe to be the truth or the reality of things. But a proposition is by no means true because it is useful. Constantine believed eminently in the concord-producing utility of certain confessions enunciated at the Council of Nice, but his belief in this does not prove their truth or reality outside the convictions of the faithful. Nor does the pragmatist or utilitarian character of certain portions of the writings of the Old Testament or of the Koran prove the matter of their literal and factual truth in the ordinary sense of these terms. As Hume said, "When any opinion leads us into absurdities 'tis certainly false, but 'tis not certain that an opinion is false because it has dangerous consequences."

And then, apart from this conspicuous absence of logic in the views of pragmatists upon "truth," the expression of their doctrine is so confusing that it is almost impossible to extract any consistent meaning out of it. They are continually confounding conceptions and ideas and propositions, forgetful of the fact that truth resides not in concepts and ideas but only in propositions. While it may be indeed true, as against Rationalism,

that all human conceptions whatsoever [and it is only in connexion with "conceptions" that Pragmatism is defined even in such an official place as Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy*<sup>1</sup>] have, and must have, reference to actual or possible human experience or consequences, it is by no means true that the test of a proposition is anything other than the evidence of which we have already spoken.

Then the pragmatists have never adequately defined terms that are so essential to their purposes as "practical," "truth," "fact," "reality," "consequences," and they confound, too, "theories" with "truths" and "concepts" just as they confound concepts and propositions.

(2) That logic and the theory of proof is thus one of the weak spots of Pragmatism has perhaps then been sufficiently indicated. We have seen, in fact, the readiness of Pragmatism to confess its inability<sup>2</sup> to prove its own philosophy—that is, to prove it in the ordinary sense of the term.<sup>3</sup> That it should have made this confession is, of course, only in keeping with the fact that its interest in logic is confined to such subordinate topics as the framing and verification of hypotheses, the development of concepts and judgments in the "thought-process," and so on. Of complete proof, as involving both deduction

<sup>1</sup> See the Note on p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Papini, in fact (in 1907), went the length of saying that you cannot even *define* Pragmatism, admitting that it appeals only to certain kinds of persons.

and induction, it takes but the scantiest recognition. And it has made almost no effort to connect its discoveries in "genetic logic" and in the theory of hypotheses with the traditional body of logical doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Nor, as may perhaps be inferred from the preceding paragraph, has it made any serious attempt to consider the question of the discovery of new truth in relation to the more or less perfectly formulated systems and schemes of truth already in the possession of mankind.

The case is similar in regard to the "theory of knowledge" of the pragmatists. While they have made many important suggestions regarding the relation of all the main categories and principles of our human thought to the theoretical and practical needs of mankind, there is in their teachings little that is satisfactory and explicit in the matter of the systematization of first principles,<sup>2</sup> and little too that is satisfactory in respect of the relation of knowledge to reality. They sometimes admit (with James) the importance of general points of view like the "causal," the "temporal," "end," and "purpose," and so on. At other times they confess with Schiller that questions about ultimate truth and ultimate

<sup>1</sup> For a serviceable account, in English, of the differences between the pragmatist philosophy of hypotheses and the more fully developed philosophy of science of the day, see Father Walker's *Theories of Knowledge*, chapter xiii., upon "Pragmatism and Physical Science."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 10 and p. 15. And this failure to systematize becomes, it should be remembered, all the more exasperating, in view of the prominence given by the pragmatists to the supreme principles of "end" and "consequences."

reality cannot be allowed to weigh upon our spirits, seeing that "actual knowing" always starts from the "existing situation."

Now of course actual knowing certainly does start from the particular case of the existing situation, but, as all thinkers from Aristotle to Hume have seen, it is by no means explained by this existing situation. In real knowledge this is always made intelligible by references to points of view and to experiences that altogether transcend it. The true theory of knowledge, in short, involves the familiar Kantian distinction between the "origin" and the "validity" of knowledge—a thing that the pragmatists seem continually and deliberately to ignore. Schiller, to be sure, reminds us with justice that we must endeavour to "connect," rather than invariably "contrast," the two terms of this distinction. But this again is by no means what the pragmatists themselves have done. They fail, in fact, to connect their hints about the practical or experimental origin of most of our points of view about reality with the problem of the validity of first principles generally.

There is a suggestion here and there in their writings that, as Schiller<sup>1</sup> puts it, there can be no coherent system of postulates except as rooted in personality, and that there are postulates at every stage of our development. What this statement means is that there are "points of

<sup>1</sup> In the "Axioms as Postulates" essay in *Personal Idealism*.

view" about reality that are incidental to the stage of our natural life (as beings among other beings), others to the stage of conscious sensations and feelings, still others to that of our desires and thoughts, to our aesthetic appreciation, to our moral life, and so on. But, as I have already said, there is little attempt on the part of the pragmatists to distinguish these different stages or planes of experience adequately from one another.

(3) References have already been made to the failures of our Anglo-American pragmatists to attain to any intelligible and consistent kind of reality, whether they conceive of this latter as the sum-total of the efforts of aspiring and achieving human beings, or with Schiller as an "original, plastic sub-stratum," or as the reality (whatever it is) that is gradually being brought into being by the creative efforts of ourselves and of beings higher or lower than ourselves in the scale of existence. Their deepest thought in the matter seems to be that the universe (our universe?) is essentially "incomplete," and that the truth of God, as James puts it, "has to run the gauntlet of other truths." One student of this topic, Professor Leighton, has arrived at the conclusion that pragmatism is essentially "acosmistic,"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bourdeau makes the same charge, saying that all pragmatists have the illusion that "reality is unstable." Professor Stout has something similar in view in referring to Dr. Schiller's "primary reality" in the *Mind* review of *Studies in Humanism*. It is only the reality with which *we* have to do (reality πρὸς ἡμᾶς as an Aristotelian

factors (God, Freedom, Recompense, Justice) without having been so affected or determined in the past? <sup>1</sup>

(4) The unsatisfactoriness of Pragmatism in the realm of ethics. Crucial and hopeless as is the failure of Pragmatism in the realm of ethics, a word or two had better be said of the right of the critic to judge of it in this connexion. In the first place, the thinking public has already expressed its distrust of a doctrine that scruples not to avow its affinity with utilitarianism, with the idea of testing truth and value by mere consequences and by the idea of the useful. "The word 'expedient,'" wrote a correspondent to Professor James, "has no other meaning than that of self-interest. The pursuit of this has ended by landing a number of officers of national banks in penitentiaries. A philosophy that leads to such results must be unsound."

Then again, Professor Dewey (now doubtless the foremost living pragmatist) is the joint author of a book upon ethics, the most prominent feature of which is the application of pragmatist-like methods and principles to moral philosophy. This book sums up, too, a great many previous illuminating discussions of his own upon ethical and educational problems, for all of which, and for its general application of the principles of Humanism to the realm of morals he has deservedly won the

<sup>1</sup> The same line of reflection will be found in James's *Pragmatism*, p. 96.



praise of Professor James himself. So we have thus the warrant both of the public and of Dewey and James for seeking to judge Pragmatism from the point of view of moral philosophy.

Another justification for seeking to judge of Pragmatism from the point of view of moral philosophy is that the whole weight of its "humanism" and of its "valuation" philosophy must inevitably fall upon its view of the moral judgment. Dr. Schiller, we have seen, is quite explicit in his opinion that for Humanism the roots of metaphysics "lie, and must lie," in ethics. And this is all the more the case, as it were, on account of the proclamation<sup>1</sup> by Pragmatism of the inability of Intellectualism to understand morality, and also on account of its recurring contention in respect of the merely hypothetical character of all intellectual truth.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Moore has a chapter in his book (*Pragmatism and its Critics*) devoted to the purpose of showing the necessary failure of Absolutism (or of an Intellectualism of the absolutist order) in the realm of ethics, finding in the experimentalism and the quasi-Darwinism of Pragmatism an atmosphere that is, to say the least, more favourable to the realities of our moral experience. While I cannot find so much as he does in the hit-and-miss ethical philosophy of Pragmatism, I quite sympathize with him in his rejection of Absolutism or Rationalism as a basis for ethics. The following are some of his reasons for this rejection: (1) The "purpose" that is involved in the ethical life must, according to Absolutism, be an all-inclusive and a fixed purpose, allowing of no "advance" and no "retreat"—things that are imperative to the idea of the *reality* of our efforts. (2) Absolutism does not provide for human responsibility; to it all actions and purposes are those of the Absolute. (3) The ethical ideal of Absolutism is too "static." (4) Absolutism does not provide any material for "new goals and new ideals." See pp. 218-225 in my eighth chapter, where I censure, in the interest of Pragmatism and Humanism, the ethical philosophy of Professor Bosanquet.

Now, unfortunately for Pragmatism, the one thing that the otherwise illuminating book of Dewey and Tufts almost completely fails to do, as the writer has already sought to indicate, is *to provide a theory of the ordinary distinction between right and wrong*.<sup>1</sup> The only theme that is really successfully pursued in this typically American book is the "constant discovery, formation, and re-formation of the 'self' in the 'ends' which an individual is called upon to sustain and develop in virtue of his membership of a 'social whole.'" But this is obviously a study in "genetic psychology," or in the psychology of ethics, but by no means a study in the theory of ethics. "The controlling principle," it characteristically tells us, "of the deliberation which renders possible the formation of a voluntary or socialized self out of our original instinctive impulses is the love of the objects which make this transformation possible." But what is it, we wish to know, that distinguished the objects that make this transformation possible from the objects that do not do so? The only answer that we can see in the book is that anything is "moral" which makes possible a "transition from individualism to efficient social personality"—obviously again a purely sociological point of view, leaving the question of the standard of efficiency quite open. The whole tendency, in short, of the pragmatist treat-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 224, where I arrive at the conclusion that the same thing may be said of the Absolutism of Dr. Bosanquet.

ment of ethical principles is to the effect that standards and theories of conduct are valuable only in so far as they are, to a certain extent, "fruitful" in giving us a certain "surveying power" in the perplexities and uncertainties of "direct personal behaviour." They are all, in other words, merely relative or useful, and none of them is absolute and authoritative. It is this last thing, however, that is the real desideratum of ethical theory. And so far as practice is concerned, all that this Pragmatism or "Relativism" in morals inevitably leads to is the conclusion that whatever brings about a change, or a result, or a "new formation," or a new "development" of the moral situation, is necessarily moral, that "growth" and "liberation" and "fruitfulness," and "experimentation" are everything, and moral scruples and conscience simply nothing. In the celebrated phrase of Nietzsche, "Everything is permissible and nothing is true or binding."

Is not, then, this would-be ethical phase of Pragmatism just too modernistic, too merely practical, too merely illuminative and enlightening? And would it not be better for the youth of America (for Dewey's book is in the *American Science Series*) and other countries to learn that *not* everything "practical" and "formative" and "liberative" and "socializing" is *moral* in the strict sense of the term? <sup>1</sup> In saying

<sup>1</sup> Students of that important nineteenth-century book upon Ethics,

this I am, of course, giving but a very imperfect idea of the contents of a book which is, in many respects, both epoch-marking and epoch-making. It is, however, unfortunately, in some respects, only too much in touch with "present facts and tendencies," with the regrettable tendency of the hour, for example, to justify as right any conduct that momentarily "improves the situation," or that "liberates the activities" of the parties concerned in it. It is not enough, in other words (and this is all, I am inclined to think, that Pragmatism can do in morals), to set up a somewhat suggestive picture of the "life of the moral man in our present transitional" and would-be "constructive" age. A moral man does not merely, in common parlance, "keep up with the procession," going in for its endless "formations" and "re-formations." He seeks to "lead" it, and this *leading* of men, this setting up of a standard of the legitimacy or of the illegitimacy of certain social experiments is just what Pragmatism cannot do in morals.

It is otherwise, doubtless, with a true humanism, or with the humanism that Pragmatism is endeavouring to become.

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the *Methods of Ethics*, by Henry Sidgwick, will remember that Sidgwick expressly states it as a grave argument against Utilitarianism that it is by no means confirmed by the study of the actual origin of moral distinctions. As we go back in history we do not find that moral prescriptions have merely a utilitarian value.

## CHAPTER VI

### PRAGMATISM AS HUMANISM

IN spite of the objections that have been brought in the preceding chapters against Pragmatism as Instrumentalism and Practicalism, the great thing about Pragmatism as the Humanism that it is tending to become is the position that it virtually occupies in respect of the ethical and the personal factors that enter into all our notions about final truth. To Pragmatism the importance of these factors in this connexion is apparent from the outset, it being to it the merest truism that by final truth we cannot mean "truth" existing on its own account, but rather the truth of the world as inclusive of man and his purposes. For so much it stands by its very letter as well as by its spirit. And if we can find any confirmation for this attitude in some of the concessions of the rationalists that have been previously mentioned, so much the better, as it were, for Pragmatism.

Now it might well seem as if Pragmatism by the denial of an absolute or impersonal truth is so far simply another version of modern agnosti-



cism, or of the older doctrine of the "relativity" of human knowledge. There is a great difference, however, between these two things and Pragmatism. A mere agnostical, or relativity, philosophy generally carries with it the belief that the inmost reality of things is both unknowable and out of all relation alike to human purpose and to human knowledge. Pragmatism, on the contrary, would like to maintain—if it could do so logically—that in human volition, we do know something about the inward meaning of things, that the "developmental" view of things is, when properly interpreted, the real view, that reality is at least what it comes to be in our "purposes" and in our ideals, and not something different from this.

The main reason, however, of the inability of Pragmatism to do what it would like to do in this connexion is what we have already complained of as its failure either to recognize, or to use, the help that could be afforded to it by (1) Idealism, and by (2) the "normative"<sup>1</sup> view of ethical science.

<sup>1</sup> What I understand by the "normative idea of ethical science" will become more apparent as I proceed. I may as well state, however, that I look upon the distinction between the "descriptive" ideals of science and the "normative" character of the ideals of the ethical and the socio-political sciences as both fundamental and far-reaching. There are *two* things, as it were, that constitute what we might call the subject-matter of philosophy—"facts" and "ideals"; or, rather, it is the synthesis and reconciliation of these two orders of reality that constitute the supreme problem of philosophy. It is with the description of facts and of the laws of the sequences of things that the "methodology" of science and of Pragmatism is in the main concerned. And it is because Pragmatism has hitherto shown itself unable to rise above the descriptive and



In respect of the first point, we have already suggested, for example, that Pragmatism is inclined in various ways to make much of its "radical empiricism," its contention that reality must, to begin with, be construed to be what it seems to be in our actual dealings with it and in our actual experience of it.<sup>1</sup> To the biologist, as we put it in our fourth chapter, reality is life; to the physicist it is energy; to the theologian it is the unfolding of the dealings of God with His creatures; to the sociologist it is the sphere of the evolution of the social life of humanity; to the lover of truth it is a "partly intelligible system." The only rational basis, however, for all this constructive interpretation of reality is the familiar idealist position of the necessary implication of the "subject" in the "object," the fact that "things" or "existences" are invariably thought of as the elements or component parts in some working system or sphere of reality that is contemplated by some being or beings in reference to some purpose or end. On its so-called lowest plane, indeed, reality is conceived as the play of all the particles of matter, or of all the elemental forces of nature, upon each other. And on this construction of things

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hypothetical science of the day to the ideals of the normative sciences (ethics, aesthetics, etc.) that it is an imperfect philosophy of reality as we know it, or of the different orders of reality.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Professor Ward in *Naturalism and Agnosticism* (vol. ii. p. 155): "What each one immediately deals with in his own experience is, I repeat, objective reality in the most fundamental sense."

the susceptibility of everything to the influence of everything else is no less certainly assumed than in the case of the world of life itself. But, as the idealist realizes in a moment, there is no possibility of separating, either in thought or experimentally, this supposed physical world from the so-called experiences and relations and laws through which it is interpreted and described, even as a world of objects or of forces. This is what Parmenides saw ages ago when he said that "thought" and "being" are the same thing, that "being" belongs to "thought," that "being" is the true object of thought, and that being is the "rational" and the "thinkable" and not something outside thought. It is what a scientist, an expounder of science, like Professor J. A. Thompson means and partly states when he says, speaking of the work of many of his fellow-scientists of the day, "The matter of physical science is an abstraction, whereas the matter of our direct experience is in certain conditions the physical basis of life and the home of the soul."<sup>1</sup>

To the objector who again retorts that this line of reflection seems to rest upon a very large assumption as to the nature of the apparently illimitable physical universe, the idealist can but reply, firstly, that we know nothing of the so-called natural world save through the so-called spiritual or psychical world,<sup>2</sup> and secondly, that even the

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to Science*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> "But if the primitive Amoebae gave rise 'in the natural course of events' to higher organisms and these to higher, until there emerged

most complete description of the world from the point of view of science would, of course, still leave the world of our mental experiences entirely unexplained. It is surely, therefore, so far, much more logical to use this last world as at least the partial explanation of the former rather than *vice versa*.

And as for the "normative" view of ethics and the help it affords to Pragmatism in its contention in respect of final truth, it may be said, to begin with, that it is in the ethical life that what we call the truth of things becomes the basis of an ideal of personal achievement. It is not merely of man's well-known transformation and utilization of the forces of nature that we are at present thinking, but of the fact that in the moral life man "superposes," as has been said, an order of his own upon the so-called natural order of things, transforming it into a spiritual order. This superposition, if we will, this transformation, is revealed unmistakably in the history of the facts of conduct.

In the recent elaborate researches in sociological ethics of Hobhouse and Westermarck<sup>1</sup> we read,

the supreme Mammal, who by and by had a theory of it all, then the primitive Amoebae which had in them the promise and the potency of all this *were very wonderful Amoebae indeed*. There must have been more in them than met the eye! *We must stock them with initiatives at least. We are taking a good deal as 'given.'*" [Italics mine.]—J. H. Thomson, *Introduction to Science*. p. 137.

<sup>1</sup> See Westermarck, vol. i. pp. 74, 93, 117, and chapter iii. generally. The sentence further down in respect of the permanent fact of the moral consciousness is from Hobhouse, vol. ii. p. 54. As instances of the latter, Hobhouse talks of things like the "purity of the home, truthfulness, •

for example, of facts like the gradual "blunting of the edges of barbarian ideas," and the recognition of the "principal moral obligations" in the early oriental civilizations, the existence of the "doctrine of forgiveness," and of "disinterested retributive kindly emotion," the acceptance and redistribution by Confucius of the traditional standards of Chinese ethics, the "transformation" by the Hebrew prophets of the "law of a barbarous people into the spiritual worship of one God," of a God of "social justice," of "mercy," and finally of "love." Both these writers, in view of such facts and of other facts of a kindred nature, arrive at the conclusion that the supreme authority assigned to the moral law is not altogether an illusion, that there is after all the "*great permanent fact of the moral consciousness persisting through all stages of development*," that whether we believe or disbelieve in God, or religion, or nature, or what not, there remain for all of us certain things to do which affect us with a greater or less degree of mental discomfort."

Now as we think of it, there is something that Pragmatism fails to see in respect of this undoubted transformation of the merely physical basis of our life that takes place, or that has taken place, in the moral life of humanity. While firmly holding in its moral philosophy (we can see this in the

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hospitality, help, etc., in Iran, of the doctrine of Non-Resistance in Lao Tsze, of the high conception of personal righteousness revealed in the *Book of the Dead*, of the contributions of monotheism to ethics, etc. etc.

typical work of Dewey and Tufts<sup>1</sup>) to its far-reaching principle that our entire intellectual life has been worked out in the closest kind of relation to our practical needs, Pragmatism has nevertheless failed to see that in the highest reaches of our active life the controlling ideas ("justice," "humanity," "courage," and so on) have a value independently of any consequences other than those of their realization in the purposes and in the dispositions of men. Or, more definitely, it is just because moral ideas, like any ideas, cannot fail to work themselves out into our actions and into our very dispositions and character, that it becomes of the utmost importance to conceive of the truth they embody as having a value above all consequences and above all ordinary utility. If sought ever and always for its own sake, the highest kind of truth and insight, the truth that we apprehend in our highest intuitions and in our highest efforts, will inevitably tend to the creation of a realm of "value," a realm of personal worth and activity that we cannot but regard as the highest reality,<sup>2</sup> or the highest plane

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> It may, I suppose, be possible to exaggerate here and to fall to some extent into what Mr. Bradley and Nietzsche and others have thought of as the "radical vice of all goodness"—its tendency to forget that other things, like beauty and truth, may also be thought of as absolute "values," as revelations of the divine. What I am thinking of here is simply the realm of fact that is implied, say, in the idea of Horace, when he speaks of the upright man being undismayed even by the fall of the heavens (*impavidum ferient ruinae*) or by the idea of the Stoic sage that the virtuous man was as necessary to Jupiter as Jupiter could be to him, or by the idea (attributed to Socrates) that



of experience of which we are conscious. In this thought, then, in the thought of the reality of the life and work of human beings who have given all for truth and goodness and love, there is surely at least a partial clue to the value of the great idea after which Pragmatism is blindly groping in its contention of the importance even to metaphysics of the notion of our human, "purposive" activity.

Indeed, when we think of the matter carefully it is doubtful whether the human mind would ever even have attained to the notion of ideal truth, with the correlative thought of the shortcomings or the limits of our ordinary knowledge, if it had not been for the moral life and the serious problem it sets before us as men—that of the complete satisfaction or the complete assertion of our human personality. We seek truth in the first instance because we wish to act upon certainty or upon adequate certainty, and because we feel that we must be determined by what appeals to our own convictions and motives, by what has become part of our own life and consciousness. It is only in fact because we will it, and because we want it, that the "ideal" exists—the ideal of anything, more certain

if the rulers of the universe do not prefer the just man to the unjust it is better to die than to live. If against all this sort of thing one is reminded by realism of the "splendid immoralism" of Nature, of its apparent indifference to all good and ill desert, I can but reply, as I have done elsewhere in this book, that the Nature of which physical science speaks is an "abstraction" and an unreality, and that it matters, therefore, very little whether such a Nature is, or is not, indifferent to morality. We know, however, of no Nature apart from life, and mind, and consciousness, and thought, and will. It is God, and not Nature, who makes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust.



knowledge about something, for example, or gratified curiosity, or satisfied desire, and so on. In every case, say, of the pursuit of an ideal we desire something or some state of things that does not yet exist. The actual, if indeed (which is doubtful) we can think of the actual merely as such, does not engender the notion of the ideal, although there is possibly a suggestion of the "ideal" in the "meaning" that we cannot, even in sense perception,<sup>1</sup> attach to the actual.

Even science, as we call it, is very far from being a mere description of the actual, it is an ideal "construction" or "interpretation" of the same in the interest, not of mere utility, but of the wonder and the curiosity and the intellectual and aesthetical satisfaction of our entire personality, of our disinterested love of the highest truth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By this "meaning" is to be understood firstly the effects upon our appetitive and conative tendencies of the various specific items (whether sensation, or affections, or emotions, or what not) of our experience, the significance, that is to say, to our total general activity of all the particular happenings and incidents of our experience. Psychologists all tell us of the vast system of "dispositions" with which our psychophysical organism is equipped at birth, and through the help of which we interpret the sensations and occurrences of our experience. And in addition to these dispositions we have, in the case of the adult, the coming into play of the many associations and memories that are acquired during the experiences of a single lifetime. It is these various associations that interpret to us the present and give it meaning. In a higher sense we might interpret "meaning" as expressive of the higher predicates, like the good and the beautiful and the true, that we apply to some things in the world of our socialized experience. And in the highest sense we might interpret it as the significance that we attach to human history as distinguished from the mere course of events—the significance upon which the philosophy of history reposes. See Eucken in the article upon the *Philosophy of History* in the "systematic" volume of Hinneberg's *Kultur der Gegenwart*.

<sup>2</sup> See our second chapter upon the different continental and British

A striking example of the part played by moral and personal factors in the evolution of truth may easily be found, as has already been suggested, in some of the circumstances connected with the evolution of the Platonic philosophy in the mind of its creator. Plato's constant use of the dialogue form of exposition is of itself an expression of the fact that philosophy was always to him a living and a personal thing, the outcome of an intellectual emotion of the soul in its efforts after true knowledge and spiritual perfection. It speaks also of Plato's essentially social conception of philosophy, as a creation arising out of the contact of mind with mind, in the search after wisdom and virtue and justice. And there is little doubt that his own discontent with the social conditions of his time and with the false wisdom of the sophists was a powerful impulse in his mind in the development of that body of intellectual and ethical truth for all time that is to be found in his works. The determining consideration, again, in the arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo* is not so much the imperfect physical and theoretical philosophy on which they are partly made to

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representatives of the hypothetical treatment of scientific laws and conceptions that is such a well-marked tendency of the present time. By no one perhaps was this theory put more emphatically than by Windelband (of Strassburg) in his *Präludien* (1884) and in his *Geschichte und Naturwissenschaft* (1894). In the latter he contrasts the real individuals and personalities with which the historians deal with the impersonal abstractions of natural science. I fully subscribe to this distinction, and think that it underlies a great deal of the thought of recent times.

repose as the tremendous conviction of Plato of the supreme importance of right conduct, of his belief in the principle of the "best."

Plato has a way, too, of talking of truth as a kind of "addition"<sup>1</sup> to being and science, as a "being" that "shares" somehow in the "idea of the Good"—a tendency that, despite the imperfect hold of the Greek mind upon the fact and the conception of personality, we may also look upon as a confirmation of the pragmatist notion of the necessity of ethical and personal factors in a complete theory of truth.

A still more important instance of the importance of moral and practical factors to a final philosophy of things is to be found in the lasting influence of the great Hebrew teachers upon both the ancient and the modern world, although the mere mention of this topic is apt to give offence to some of our Neo-Hellenists<sup>2</sup> and to thinkers like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The remarkable thing about the Hebrew seers is their intuition of God as "the living source of their life and strength

<sup>1</sup> See "truth and real existence" in the *Republic*, 508 D—Jowett's rendering of ἀληθεία τε καὶ τὸ ὄν ("over which truth and real existence are shining"). Also further in the same place, "The cause of science and of truth," αἰτία δ' ἐπιστήμης οὖσαν καὶ ἀληθείας. In 389 E we read that a "high value must be set on truth." Of course to Plato "truth" is also, and perhaps even primarily, real existence, as when he says (*Rep.* 585), "that which has less of truth will also have less of essence." But in any case truth always means more for him than "mere being," or existence, or "appearance," it is the highest form of being, the object of "science," the great discovery of the higher reason.

<sup>2</sup> To Professor Bosanquet, for example; see below, p. 213, note 2.

and joy," not as a mere first principle of thought, not as the substance of things, not as the mere "end of patient search and striving," but as the "*first principle of life and feeling.*"<sup>1</sup> And their work for the world lay in the bringing to an end of the entire mythology and cosmology of the age of fable and fancy, and the substitution for all this of the worship of one God, as something distinct and different from all the cults of polytheism, as a great social and ethical achievement, as a true religion that loved justice and social order because it loved God. "In Hebrew poetry,"<sup>2</sup> says a recent authority upon this subject, "all things appear in action. The verb is the predominating element in the sentence. And though the shades of time distinctions are blurred, the richness of the language throws the precise complexion of the act into clear, strong light." If this be so, there is, of course, no wonder that this people elaborated for mankind a living and practical, a "pragmatist" (if we will) view of the world, which is so rich by way of its very contrast both to Greek and to modern scientific conceptions. With the enumeration of two specific instances from this same writer of the Hebrew perception of the importance of practical and personal factors to a true grasp of certain fundamental ideas, we may safely leave this great source of some of the leading ideas of

<sup>1</sup> *The Poetry of the Old Testament*, Professor A. R. Gordon.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

our western world to take care of itself. "The Hebrew counterpart to the Greek ideal of *ὁ καλὸς κἀγαθός*, 'the finely-polished gentleman,' is *hāsîd*, the adjective derived from *hesed*, that is 'the man of love.' As God is love, the good man is likewise a lover both of God and of his fellow-men. His love is indeed the pure reflection of God's—tender and true and active as His is. For in no other ancient religion are the fear and love of God so indissolubly wedded to moral conduct."<sup>1</sup> And secondly, speaking of immortality, Professor Gordon says, "The glad hope of immortality rests, not on speculative arguments from the nature of the soul, but on the sure ground of religious experience. Immortality is, in fact, a necessary implicate of personal religion. The man that lives with God is immortal as He is."<sup>2</sup>

If the reader be inclined to interject here that all that this pragmatist talk about the importance of action obviously amounts to is simply the position that the highest truth must somehow take recognition of our beliefs as well as of our knowledge, we can but reply that he is literally so far in the right. Our point, however, for Pragmatism would here be that belief rests not merely upon the intellect, but upon the intellect in conjunction with the active and the ethical nature of man. It is mainly because we feel ourselves to be active and legislative and creative, mainly because we partly are and partly hope to

<sup>1</sup> *The Poetry of the Old Testament*, p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 183-184.



be, as the phrase has it, that we believe as well as seek continually to know. Hence the rightness and the soundness of Pragmatism in its contention; the truth is not so much a datum (something given) as a construction,<sup>1</sup> or a thing that is made and invented by way of an approximation to an ideal.

That it is this almost in the literal sense of these words is evident from the fact of the slow and gradual accumulation of truth and knowledge about themselves and their environment by the fleeting generations of men. And even to-day the truth is not something that exists in nature or in history or in some privileged institution, or in the teaching of some guild of masters, but rather only in the attitude of mind and heart of the human beings who continue to seek it and to will it and to live it when and where they may. Truth includes, too, the truth of the social order, of civilization <sup>2</sup>—this last costly

<sup>1</sup> It is this false conception of truth as a "datum" or "content" that wrecks the whole of Mr. Bradley's argument in *Appearance and Reality*. See on the contrary the following quotation from Professor Boyce Gibson (Eucken's *Philosophy of Life*, p. 109) in respect of the attitude of Eucken towards the idea of truth as a personal ideal. "The ultimate criterion of truth is not the clearness and the distinctness of our thinking, nor its correspondence with a reality external to it, nor any other intellectualistic principle. It is spiritual fruitfulness as invariably realized by the personal experient, invariably realized as springing freshly and freely from the inexhaustible resources which our freedom gains from its dependence upon God."

<sup>2</sup> It is part of the greatness of Hegel, I think, to have sought to include the truth of history and of the social order in the truth of philosophy, or in spiritual truth generally. His error consists in not allowing for the fresh revelations of truth that have come to the world through the insight of individuals and through the actions and the creations of original men.



work being just as much the creation of the mind and the behaviour of men as is knowledge itself. And there can, it would seem, be but slight objection to an admission of the fact that it is only in so far as the truth has been conceived as inclusive of the truth of human life as well as of that of the world of things that humanity as a whole seems to have any abiding interest in its existence, even where, as in *Omar Khayyàm* and in other writings, the idea of its discovery is given up as impossible. Only, in other words, as the working out of the implications of desire does thought live, and the completest thought is at bottom but the working out of the deepest desire.<sup>1</sup>

These two elements of our life, thought and

<sup>1</sup> There is a sentence in the *Metaphysics* of which I cannot but think at this point, and which so far at least as the rationalist-pragmatist issue is concerned is really one of the deepest and most instructive ideas in the whole history of philosophy. It is one of Aristotle's troublesome additional statements in reference to something that he has just been discussing—in this case the "object of desire" and the "object of thought." And what he adds in the present instance is this (Bk. xii. 7): "*The primary objects of these two things are the same—τοῦτων τὰ πρῶτα τὰ αὐτά*—rendered by Smith and Ross "*the primary objects of thought and desire are the same.*" The translation, of course, is a matter of some slight difficulty, turning upon the proper interpretation of τὰ πρῶτα, "the first things," although, of course, the student soon becomes familiar with what Aristotle means by "first things," and "first philosophy," and "first in nature," and "first for us," and so on. Themistius in his commentary on this passage (*Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. v. i-vi; *Themistius in Metaphysica*, 1072 and 17-30) puts it that "in the case of immaterial existences the desirable and the intelligible are the same—in primis vero principiis materiae non immixtis *idem est desiderabile atque intelligibile.*" I am inclined to use this great idea of the identity of the desirable and the intelligible—for conscious, intelligent beings as the fundamental principle of the true Humanism of which Pragmatism is in search. It is evidently in this identity that Professor Bosanquet

desire, have had indeed a parallel development in the life of mankind. What we call the predicate of thought bespeaks invariably an underlying (or personal) reaction or attitude towards the so-called object of thought.<sup>1</sup> When desire ceases, as it does sometimes in the case of a disappointed man, or the pessimist, or the agnostic, or the mystic, thought too ceases. Even the philosophical mood, as likewise the expression of a desire, is as such comparable to other motives or desires, such as the scientific or the practical or the emotional, and subject, too, like them, to the various "conflicts" of personality.<sup>2</sup> The free speculative thought or activity that, with the Greeks, we sometimes think of as the highest attribute of our human nature, is itself but the highest phase of that free creative<sup>3</sup> activity which we have found to

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also believes in when he says: "I am persuaded that if we critically understand what we really want and need, we shall find it established by a straightforward argument" (Preface to *Individuality and Value*. See the eighth chapter of this book). It is certainly true that the constructive philosophy of which we are in search to-day must leave no gap between thought and desire.

<sup>1</sup> I find an illustration or a confirmation of this thought in the following piece of insight of Mr. Chesterton in regard to the "good," which is no doubt a "predicate" of our total thought and feeling and volition. "Or, in other words, man cannot escape from God, because good is God in man; and insists on omniscience" (*Victorian Age in Literature*, p. 246—italics mine). A belief in goodness is certainly a belief in an active goodness greater than our own; and it does raise a desire for a comprehension of things.

<sup>2</sup> The reader will find a good deal in Professor Baldwin's *Social and Ethical Interpretations of Mental Development* upon the relation of truth and thought to desire, and also upon the social, or the pragmatist or the experimental test of beliefs.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter IX., in reference to Bergson's "creative activity."

underlie the moral life and all the various constructions of mankind, inclusive of the work of civilization itself.

Lastly, there is, as we know, ample warrant in the past and the present reflections of men of science upon the apparent limits<sup>1</sup> and limita-

<sup>1</sup> The reader who is anxious to obtain a working idea of the limits of knowledge from a scientific point of view had better consult such pieces of literature as Sir Oliver Lodge's recent examination of Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*, Professor Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, Merz's *History of European Thought during the Nineteenth Century*, or Verworn's *General Physiology* (with its interesting account of the different theories of the origin of life, and its admission that after all we know matter only through mind and sensation). Perusal of the most recent accessible literature upon this whole subject will reveal the fact that these old questions about the origin of life and motion, and about the nature of evolution, are still as unsettled as they were in the last half of the last century. It is not merely, however, of the actual limits of science at any one time that we are obliged, as human beings, to think, but of the limits of science in view of the fact that our knowledge comes to us *in part*, under the conditions of space and time, and under the conditions of the limits of our senses and of our understanding. Knowledge is certainly limited in the light of what beings other than ourselves may know, and in the light of what we would *like* to know about the universe of life and mind.

I do not think that this whole question of the limits of our knowledge is such a burning question to-day as it was some years ago, there being several reasons for this. One is that we live in an age of specialization and discursiveness and "technic." It is quite difficult to meet with people who think that they may know, some day, everything, from even some single point of view. And then the wide acceptance of the hypothetical or the pragmatist conception of knowledge has caused us to look upon the matter of the limits of science and knowledge as a relative one, as always related to, and conditioned by, certain points of view and certain assumptions. We are not even warranted, for example, in thinking of mind and matter as separate in the old way, nor can we separate the life of the individual from the life of the race, nor the world from God, nor man from God, and so on. See an article by the writer (in 1898 in the *Psy. Rev.*) upon "Professor Titchener's View of the Self," dealing with the actual, and the necessary limits, of the point of view of Structural Psychology in regard to the "self." Also Professor Titchener's reply to this article in a subsequent number of the same review, and my own rejoinder.

tions of our knowledge of our environment to justify the correctness of the pragmatist insistence upon the ethical and the personal factors that enter into truth. Reference having already been made to these limits, there is perhaps little need of pursuing this topic any further, either so far as the facts themselves are concerned or so far as their admission by scientists and others is concerned. How any supposed mere physical order can ever come *to know itself as such*, either in the minds of men or in the minds of beings other than men, is of course the crowning difficulty of what we call a physical philosophy—a difficulty that transcends altogether the many familiar and universally admitted difficulties in respect of topics like the origin of motion and the origin of life, and the infinite number of adjustments and adaptations involved in the development of the world of things and men with which we are acquainted. Obviously, to say the very least, only when some explanation of consciousness and feeling and thought is added on to our knowledge of Nature (fragmentary as is the latter at best) will the demands of thought and of desire for unity in our knowledge be satisfied or set at rest. Now, of course, to religious thought all this costly explanation, all this completion and systematization of our knowledge are revealed, in the main, only to a faith in God and to a consequent faith in the final “perfection” of our human life as the gradual evolution of a divine

kingdom. And while Pragmatism cannot, especially in its cruder or more popular form, be credited with anything like a rational justification of the religious point of view about reality and of the vision it opens up, it may, nevertheless, in virtue of its insistence upon such things as (1) the rationality of the belief that accompanies all knowledge, (2) the supposedly deeper phenomena of the science of human nature to which reference has already been made, and (3) the great spiritual reality that is present to the individual in the moral life, and that lifts him "out of himself," and that makes it impossible for him to "understand himself by himself alone,"<sup>1</sup> justifiably lay claim to the possession of a thorough working sympathy with the religious view of the world.

With the direction of the attention of the reader to two important corollaries or consequences of the "pluralism" and the "dynamic idealism" of Pragmatism this chapter may well be brought to a termination.

One of the most obvious corollaries of nearly everything that has been put forward by us in the foregoing chapters as pragmatist doctrine or pragmatist tendency, is the marked distance at which<sup>2</sup> it all seems to stand from the various entanglements of the false philosophy of "subjective," or "solipsistic" idealism. In other words, while we have ventured to censure Prag-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter II. p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Despite what we spoke of in Chapter V. as its "subjectivism," p. 134.

matism for its inability to recognize the elemental truth<sup>1</sup> in Idealism, we must now record it as a merit of Pragmatism that it does not, like so much modern philosophy, take its start with the "contents" of the consciousness of the individual as the one indubitable beginning, the one *inconcussum quid* for all speculation. This starting-point has often, as we know, been taken (even by students of philosophy) to be the very essence of Idealism, but it is not so. Although there is indeed no "object" without a "subject," no "matter" without "mind," neither mind nor matter is limited to *my* experience of the same.<sup>2</sup> It is impossible for me to interpret, or even to express, to myself the contents of my experience without using the terms and the conceptions that have been invented by minds and by personalities other than my own without whom I could not, and do not, grow up into what I call my "self-consciousness."<sup>3</sup> We have all talked

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, the simple truth that there is no "object" without a "subject," no "physical" world without a world of "psychical" experiences on the part of some beings or some being. If our earth existed before animated beings appeared upon it, it was only as a part of some other "system" which we must think of as the object of some mind or intelligence.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 235, note 2, in the Bergson chapter, where it is suggested that to Bergson human perceptions do not, of course, exhaust matter.

<sup>3</sup> Among the many other good things in Mr. Marett's admirable *Anthropology* (one of the freshest works upon the subject, suggestive of the need, evidently felt in Oxford as well as elsewhere, of studying philosophy and letters, and nearly everything else in the mental and moral sciences, from the point of view of social anthropology) are the clearness and the relevancy of illustration in his insistence upon the importance of the "social factor" over all our thoughts of ourselves as agents and students in the universe of things." Payne shows us



of ourselves (as we know from experience and from psychology) in the third person as objects for a common social experience long before we learn to use the first personal pronoun. And as for the adult, his "ego" or self has a meaning and a reality only in relation to, and in comparison with, the other selves of whom he thinks as his associates. An "ego" implies invariably also an "alter" an "other," and thus our deepest thought about the universe is always, actually and necessarily, both personal and social. Even in art, and in religion, and in philosophy, it is the communion of mind with mind, of soul with soul, that is at once our deepest experience and our deepest desire.

I do not suggest for one moment that Pragmatism is the only philosophy (if indeed we may call it a philosophy at all) that is necessarily

(p. 146) "reason for believing that the collective 'we' precedes 'I' in the order of linguistic evolution. To begin with, in America and elsewhere, 'we' may be inclusive and mean 'all of us,' or selective, meaning 'some of us only.' Hence a missionary must be very careful, and if he is preaching, must use the inclusive 'we' in saying 'we have sinned,' whereas, in praying, he must use the selective 'we,' or God would be included in the list of sinners. Similarly 'I' has a collective form amongst some American languages; and this is ordinarily employed, whereas the corresponding selective form is used only in special cases. Thus, if the question be 'Who will help?' the Apache will reply, 'I-amongst-others,' 'I-for-one'; but if he were recounting his personal exploits, he says *sheedah*, 'I-by-myself,' to show they were wholly his own. Here we seem to have *group-consciousness holding its own against individual self-consciousness, as being for primitive folk on the whole the more normal attitude of mind.*" It is indeed to be hoped that, in the future, philosophy, by discarding its abstractionism and its (closely allied) solipsism, will do its share in making this "group consciousness," this consciousness of our being indeed "fellow-workers" with all men, once again a property of our minds and our thoughts.

committed to Pluralism,<sup>1</sup> nor am I, of course, blind to the difficulties that Pluralism, as over against Monism, presents to many thinking minds. But I do here say that if Pragmatism be true, as it is in the main (at least as an "approach" to philosophy), it follows that the reality with which we are in contact in all our thoughts and in all our theorizing is not any or all of the "contents" of the consciousness of the individual thinker, but rather the common, personal life of activity and experience and knowledge and emotion that we as individuals share with other individuals. This life is that of an entire "world of intersubjective intercourse,"<sup>2</sup> of a

<sup>1</sup> One of Professor James's last books is called *A Pluralistic Universe*, and both he and Professor Dewey have always written under the pressure of the sociological interest of modern times. In short, it is obvious that the "reality" underlying the entire pragmatist polemic against the hypothetical character of the reading of the world afforded us by the sciences, is the social and personal life that is the deepest thing in our experience.

<sup>2</sup> This idea of a "world of inter-subjective intercourse," although now a commonplace of sociology, was first expressed for the writer in the first series of the *Gifford Lectures* of Professor James Ward upon "Naturalism and Agnosticism," in chapters xv. and xvi. The first of these chapters deals with "Experience and Life," and the second with the "inter-subjective intercourse" that is really presupposed in the so-called individual experience of which the old psychology used to make so much. The reader who wishes to follow out a development of this idea of a "world of inter-subjective intercourse" cannot do better than follow the argument of Professor Ward's second series of *Gifford Lectures* ("The Realm of Ends," or "Pluralism and Theism"), in which he will find a Humanism and Theism that is at least akin to the theodicy, or the natural theology, of which we might suppose Pragmatism to be enamoured. The double series of these Lectures might well be referred to as an instance of the kind of classical English work in philosophy of which we have spoken as not falling into the extremes either of Pragmatism or of Rationalism. The strong point of the "Realm of Ends," from the point of view of this book upon Pragmatism and Idealism,

communion of thought, and feeling, and effort in which, as persons, we share the common life of persons, and are members one of another.<sup>1</sup>

Truth itself, in fact, as may be seen, of course, from the very connexion of the word truth with other words like "try"<sup>2</sup> and "utter" (and in its

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is that it moves from first to last in the reality of that world to which the science and the philosophy of the day both seem to point the way. In opposition to "subjectivism" it teaches a Humanism and a Pluralism that we recognise as an expression of the realities of the world of our common life and our common efforts, and from this Humanism it proceeds to a Theism which its author seeks to defend from many of the familiar difficulties of Naturalism. Were the writer concerned with the matter of the development and the elaboration of the philosophy that seems to have precipitated itself into his mind after some years of reflection on the issues between the realists and the idealists, between the rationalists and the pragmatists, he would have to begin by saying that its outlines are at least represented for him in the theistic and pluralistic philosophy of Professor Ward.

<sup>1</sup> According to Professor Dawes Hicks in the *Hibbert Journal* for April 1913, there is a great deal in the articles of Professor Alexander on "Collective Willing and Truth" that supports some of the positions I am here attempting to indicate, as part of the outcome of the pragmatist-rationalist controversy. "Both goodness and truth depend, in the first place, on the recognition by one man of consciousness in others, and, secondly, upon intersubjective intercourse" (p. 658).

<sup>2</sup> I owe this reference (which I have attempted to verify) to a suggestive and ingenious book (*The New Word*, by Mr. Allen Upward) lent to me by a Montreal friend. Skeat, in his Dictionary, gives as the meaning of truth, "*firm, established, certain, honest, faithful*," connecting it with A.S. *tréou, tryw* ("preservation of a compact"), Teut. *trewa*, saying that the "root" is "unknown." I suppose that similar things might be said about the Greek word *ἐρεβν* in its different forms, which Liddel and Scott connect with "Sans., *satyas* (*verus*), O. Nor. *Sannr*, A.S. *sóth* (sooth)." All this seems to justify the idea of the social confirmation of truth for which I am inclined to stand, and the connexion of intellectual truth with ethical truth, with the truth of human life. I agree with Lotze that truths do not float above, or over, or between, things, but that they exist only in the thought of a thinker, in so far as he thinks, or in the action of a living being in the moment of his action—the *Microcosmos* as quoted in Eisler, article "*Wahrheit*" in the *Wörterbuch*. The Truth for man would be the coherence of his

root with words like "ware" and "verihood"), is a social possession, implying both seekers and finders, listeners and verifiers as well as speakers and thinkers. Its existence implies a universe of discourse, as the logicians put it, in which thoughts and conceptions are elaborated and corrected, not merely by a kind of self-analysis<sup>1</sup> and internal development, but by the test of the action to which they lead and of the "responses" they awaken in the lives and thoughts of other persons. And it is this very sociological<sup>2</sup> and "pluralistic" character of Pragmatism that, along with its tendency to "affirmation" in the matter of the reality of the religious life, has helped to render it (as far as it goes) such a living and such a credible philosophy to-day.

Another consequence of the dynamic idealism and the "radical empiricism" of Pragmatism is the "immediacy" of our contact with reality, for which it is naturally inclined to stand

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knowledge and his beliefs, and there is no abstract truth, or truth in and for itself, no impersonal "whole" of truth.

<sup>1</sup> As in the Hegelian dialectic.

<sup>2</sup> There is another important thing to think of in connexion with this sociological character of Pragmatism. It is a characteristic that may be used to overcome what we have elsewhere talked of as its "subjectivism" and its "individualism," and its revolutionary tendencies. It is, we might urge, a social and a collective standard of truth that Pragmatism has in view when it thinks of "consequences" and of the test of truth. Lalande takes up this idea in an article in the *Revue Philosophique* (1906) on "Pragmatisme et Pragmaticisme," pointing out that Dr. Peirce would apparently tend to base his pragmatism on the subordination of individual<sup>3</sup> to collective thought. Dr. Schiller too, I think, contemplates this social test of truth in his would-be revival of the philosophy of Protagoras—that man is the measure of reality—for man.

in the matter of what we may call the philosophy of perception. What this new "immediacy" and this new directness of our contact with reality would mean to philosophical and scientific thought can be fully appreciated only by those who have made the effort of years to live in a "thought world," in which the first reality is what the logicians term "mediation"<sup>1</sup> or inference, a world of thoughts without the reality of a really effective thinker, or the reality of a world of real action—a world from which it is somehow impossible to escape either honestly or logically. It would be a return, of course, on the part of the thinker to the direct sense of life with which we are familiar in instinct and in all true living and in all real thought,<sup>2</sup> in all honest effort and accomplishment, and yet not a "return" in any of the impossible senses in which men have often (and with a tragic earnestness) sought to return to Nature<sup>3</sup> and to the uncorrupted reality of things.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 197, where we speak of this "mediation" as the first fact for Professor Bosanquet as a prominent "Neo-Hegelian" rationalist.

<sup>2</sup> I have been asked by a friendly critic if I would include "inference" in this "real thought." I certainly would, because in all real inference we are, or ought to be, concerned with a real subject-matter, a set of relations among realities of one kind or another. Possibly all students in all subjects (especially in philosophy) have lost time in following out a set of inferences in and for themselves. But such a procedure is justified by the increased power that we get over the real subject-matter of our thought. When thought cannot be thus checked by the idea of such increased power, it is idle thought.

<sup>3</sup> I am thinking, of course, of the entire revolutionary and radical social philosophy that harks back (in theory at least) to the "Social Contract" and to the State of Nature philosophy of Rousseau and his associates and predecessors.



And we have not indeed done justice to the "instrumentalism" and the "hypothetical" treatment of ideas and of systems of thought for which Pragmatism and Humanism both stand until we see that so far from its being (almost in any sense) the duty of the thinker to justify, to his philosophy, this *direct contact* with the *infinite life* of the world, that has been the common possession of countless mortals who have lived their life, it is, on the contrary, his duty to justify (to himself and to his public) the various thought-systems of metaphysic, by setting forth the various points of departure and the various points of contact they have in the reality of the life of things.<sup>1</sup>

We spoke at the close of our fourth chapter of the strange irony that may be discovered in the fate of philosophers who have come to attach a greater importance to their own speculations and theories than to the great reality (whatever it may be, or whatever it may prove itself to be) of which all philosophy is but an imperfect (although a necessary) explanation. And the reader has doubtless come across the cynical French definition of metaphysics as the "art of losing one's way systematically" <sup>2</sup> (*l'art de s'égarer*

<sup>1</sup> See p. 184 of Chapter VII., where I speak of the ability to do this as the invariable possession of the successful American teacher of philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> An equivalent of it, of course, exists in many sayings, in many countries, in the conception of the task of the metaphysician as that of "a blind man in a dark room hunting for a black cat which—is not there," reproduced by Sir Ray Lankester in the recent book of H. S. R.



*avec méthode*). In view of all this, and in view of all the inevitable pain and difficulty of the solitary thinkers of all time, it is indeed not the least part of the service of Pragmatism and Humanism, and of the "vitalistic" and "voluntaristic" philosophy with which it may be naturally associated to-day, to have compelled even metaphysicians to *feel* that it is the living reality of the world that we *know* and that we *experience*, that is first, last, and foremost the real subject-matter of philosophy.

With the real sceptic, then, with David Hume, we may indeed be "diffident" of our "doubts" and at the same time absolutely "free" and unprejudiced in our hold upon, and in our treatment of, metaphysical systems as, all of them, but so many more or less successful attempts to state and explain, in terms appreciable by the understanding and the reason, the character and the reality of the infinite life with which we are in contact in our acts and in our thoughts and in our aspirations. Of the *reality* of that life we can never be sceptical, for it is the life that we know in that "world of inter-subjective" intercourse that, according to Pragmatism and Humanism, is implied even in sense-perception and in our daily experience.

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Eliot, *Modern Science and the Illusions of Bergson*. There is generally an error or a fallacy in such descriptions of philosophy—in this Lankester story the error that the secret of the world is a kind of "thing in itself" out of all relation to everything we know and experience—the very error against which the pragmatists are protesting.

## CHAPTER VII

### PRAGMATISM AS AMERICANISM

IN adopting the title he has chosen for the heading of this chapter the writer feels that he has laid himself open to criticism from several different points of view. What has philosophy as the universal science to do with nationalism or with any form of national characteristics? Then even if Pragmatism be discovered to be to some extent "Americanism" in the realm of thought, is this finding, or criticism, a piece of appreciation or a piece of depreciation? And again, is it possible for any individual to grasp, and to understand, and to describe such a living and such a far-reaching force as the Americanism of to-day?

The following things may be said by way of a partial answer to these reflections: (1) There are American characteristics in Pragmatism, and some of them may profitably be studied by way of an attempt to get all the light we can upon its essential nature. Their presence therein has been detected and recognized by critics, both American and foreign, and reference has already been made to

some of them in this book. (2) There is no universal reason in philosophy apart from its manifestation in the thoughts and the activities of peoples who have made or who are making their mark upon human history. It may well be that the common reason of mankind has as much to learn from Americanism in the department of theory as it has already been obliged to learn from this same quarter in the realm of practice. (3) One of the most important phases of our entire subject is precisely this very matter of the application of philosophy to "practice," of the inseparability, to put it directly, of "theory" and "practice." It would surely, therefore, be the strangest kind of conceit (although signs of it still exist here and there)<sup>1</sup> to debar philosophy

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bertrand Russell, for example, seems to me to have the prejudice that philosophy is at its best only when occupied with studies which (like the mathematics of his affections) are as remote as possible from human life. "Real life is," he says, "to most men a long second-best, a perpetual compromise between the ideal and the possible; but the world of pure reason knows no compromise, no practical limitations, no barrier to the creative activity embodying in splendid edifices the passionate aspiration after the perfect form from which all great work springs. Remote from human passions, remote even from the pitiful facts of nature, the generations have gradually created an ordered cosmos where pure thought can dwell as in its natural home, and where one, at least, of our nobler impulses can escape from the dreary exile of the actual world." I cannot—as I have indicated elsewhere in regard to Mr. Russell—see for one moment how there is any justification for looking upon this "ordered cosmos" of mathematical physics as anything other than an abstraction from the real world with which we are acquainted. It is the creation of only one of our many human interests. And I cannot see that the thought that occupies itself with this world is any nobler than the thought that occupies itself with the more complex worlds of life, and of birth and death, and of knowledge and feeling and conduct. Mr. Russell might remember, for one thing, that there have been men (Spinoza among them) who have attempted

from the study of such a practical thing as the Americanism of to-day. To connect the two with any degree of success would certainly not be to depreciate Pragmatism, but to strengthen it by relating it to a spirit that is affecting the entire life and thought of mankind.

One or two other important considerations should also be borne in mind. It goes without saying that there are in the United States and elsewhere any number of Americans who see beyond both contemporary Pragmatism and contemporary Americanism, and to whom it would be, therefore, but a partial estimate of Pragmatism to characterize it as "Americanism." So much, to be sure, might be inferred from some things that have already been said in respect of the reception and the fate of Pragmatism in its own country. Again, it is one of the errors of the day to think of Americanism as in the main merely a belief in "practicality" and "efficiency." To those who know it, Americanism is practical idealism, and its aims, instead of being merely materialistic and mechanical, are idealistic to the point of being Utopian. The American belief in work is not really a belief in work for its

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to treat of human passions under the light of ascertainable laws, and that it is (to say the very least) as legitimate for philosophy to seek for reason and law in human life, and in the evolution of human history, as in the abstract world of physical and mathematical science. Can, too, a mathematical philosophy afford any final haven for the spirit of man, without an examination of the *mind* of the mathematician and of the nature of the concepts and symbols that he uses in his researches? There is a whole world of dispute and discussion about all these things.

own sake, but rather a faith in the endless possibilities open to intelligent energy with resources at its command. Lastly, it will here certainly not be necessary either to think or to speak (even if it were possible to do so) of *all* American characteristics.<sup>1</sup>

Among the American-like characteristics in Pragmatism that have already made themselves apparent in the foregoing chapters are its insistence upon "action" and upon the free creative effort of the individual, its insistence upon the man-made (or the merely human) character of most of our vaunted truths, its instrumentalism, its radicalism,<sup>2</sup> its empiricism

<sup>1</sup> I have in view in fact only (or mainly) such American characteristics as may be thought of in connexion with the newer intellectual and social atmosphere of the present time, the atmosphere that impresses the visitor and the resident from the old world, the atmosphere to the creation of which he himself and his fellow-immigrants have contributed, as well as the native-born American of two generations ago—to go no further back. I mean that anything like a far-reaching analysis or consideration of the great qualities that go to make up the "soul" of the United States is, of course, altogether beyond the sphere of my attention for the present. I fully subscribe, in short, to the truth of the following words of Professor Santayana, one of the most scholarly and competent American students (both of philosophy and of life) of the passing generation: "America is not simply a young country with an old mentality; it is a country with two mentalities, one a survival of the beliefs and standards of the fathers, the other an expression of the instincts, practice, and discoveries of the younger generation. In all the higher things of the mind—in religion, literature, in the moral emotions, it is the hereditary spirit that still prevails, so much so, that Mr. Bernard Shaw finds that America is a hundred years behind the times."—"The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy," in *Winds of Doctrine* (p. 187).

<sup>2</sup> A contemporary American authority, Professor Bliss Perry, in his book upon *The American Mind* naturally singles out radicalism as one of the well-marked characteristics of Americans. Among the other characteristics of which he speaks are those of the "love of exaggera-



(that is to say, its endless faith in experience), its democratic character, and its insistence upon the necessity to philosophy of a broad, tolerant, all-inclusive view of human nature. So, too, are its insistence upon the basal character of belief,<sup>1</sup> and upon the importance of a creed or a philosophy that really "works" in the lives of intelligent men, its feeling of the inadequacy of a merely scholastic or dialectical philosophy, and even its *quasi* "practical" interpretation of itself in the realms of philosophy and religion and ethics—its confession of itself as a "corridor-theory," as a point of approach to all the different systems in the history of thought. In addition to these characteristics we shall attempt now to speak, in the most tentative spirit, firstly, of some of the characteristics of American university life of which Pragmatism may perhaps be regarded as a partial expression or reflex, and then after this, of such broadly-marked and such well-known American characteristics as the love of the concrete (in preference to the abstract), the love of experiment and ex-

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tion," "idealism," "optimism," "individualism," "public spirit." I refer, I think, to nearly all these things in my pages, although of course I had not the benefit of Professor Perry's book in writing the present chapter.

<sup>1</sup> I am certainly one of those who insist that we must think of America as (despite some appearances to the contrary—appearances to be seen also, for example, in the West of Canada) fundamentally a religious country. It was founded upon certain great religious ideas that were a highly important counterpart to some of the eighteenth-century fallacies about liberty and equality that exercised their influence upon the fathers of the republic.



perimentation, an intolerance of doctrinairism and of mere book-learning, the general democratic outlook on life and thought, the composite or amalgam-like character of the present culture of the United States, the sociological interest that characterizes its people, and so on. All these things are clearly to be seen in Pragmatism as a would-be philosophical system, or as a preliminary step in the evolution of such a system.

Owing very largely to the "elective" system that still prevails in the universities of the United States, Philosophy is there (to an extent somewhat inconceivable to the student of the European continent) in the most active competition with other studies, and the success of a professor of philosophy is dependent on the success of his method of presenting his subject to students who all elect studies believed by them to be useful or interesting or practically important. It has long seemed to the writer that there is abundant evidence in the writings of the pragmatists of this inevitable attempt to make philosophy a "live" subject in competition, say, with the other two most popular subjects in American colleges, viz. economics and biology. The importance to the thought of to-day of biological and economic considerations is one of the things most emphatically insisted upon by Professor Dewey in nearly all his recent writings.<sup>1</sup> And both he and James

<sup>1</sup> He has recently published a volume dealing especially with the contributions of Biology and Darwinism to philosophy.

—the fact is only too evident—have always written under the pressure of the economic and sociological interest of the American continent. And even Schiller's Humanism has become, as we have seen, very largely the metaphysics of the "evolutionary process," a characterization which we make below<sup>1</sup> as a kind of criticism of the philosophy of Bergson. Our present point, however, is merely that, owing to the generally competitive character of the intellectual life there, this biological influence is felt more acutely in America than elsewhere.

The one outstanding characteristic again of every approved academic teacher in the United States is his method of handling his subject, just as the one thing that is claimed for Pragmatism by its upholders is that it is particularly a "methodology" of thought rather than a complete philosophy. To the university constituency of the United States a professor without an approved and successful method is as good as dead, for no one would listen to him. The most manifest sign, to be sure, of the possession of such an effective method on the part of the university lecturer is the demonstration of skill in the treatment of his subject, in the "approach" that he makes to it for the beginner, in his power of setting the advanced student to work upon fruitful problems, and of giving him a complete "orientation" in the entire field under considera-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 252.

tion. And then in addition to this he must be able to indicate the practical and the educational value of what he is teaching.

In his review of James's classical work upon Pragmatism, Dewey, while indicating a number of debatable points in the pragmatist philosophy, declares emphatically his belief in that philosophy as a method of "orientation." The title again of Peirce's famous pamphlet was *How to make Ideas Clear*—a phrase of itself suggestive enough of the inquiring mind of the young student when oppressed by apparently conflicting and competing points of view. "We are acquainted with a thing," says James, "as soon as we have learned how to behave towards it, or how to meet the behaviour we accept from it." In one of his books he talks about physics, for example, as giving us not so much a theory about things as a "practical acquaintance" with bodies; "the power to take hold of them and handle them," indicating at the same time his opinion that this way of regarding knowledge should be extended to philosophy itself. All of this will serve as a proof or illustration of the essentially "practical" and "methodological" conception of philosophy taken by the pragmatists. Papini refers, we remember, to the pragmatist philosophy as a power of "commanding our material," of "manipulating" for practical purposes the different "thought-constructions" of the history of philosophy. And those who have any familiarity

with the early pragmatist magazine literature know that the pragmatists used to be fond of asking themselves such preliminary and "laboratory-like" inquiries as the following: "What is truth *known as*?" "What is philosophy *known as*?" "What are the different 'thought-levels' upon which we seem to move in our ordinary experience?" They never exactly seem to "define" philosophy for you, preferring to indicate what it can *do* for you, and so on.

Turning now to the matter of American characteristics that are broader and deeper than the merely academic, we may find an illustration, for example, of the American practicality and the love of the concrete (instead of the abstract or the merely general) in the following declaration of Professor James that "the whole originality of Pragmatism, the whole point in it, is its use of the *concrete* way of seeing. It begins with *concreteness* and returns and ends with it." Of the American love of novelty and of interest we may find an illustration in the determination of Pragmatism "never to discuss a question that has absolutely no interest and no meaning to any one." Of Pragmatism as an exemplification of the American love of experiment, and of experimentation, with a view to definite and appreciable "returns," we may give the following: "If you fully believe the pragmatic method you cannot look on any such word, *i.e.* 'God,' 'Matter,' 'Reason,' 'The Absolute,'

'Energy,' and such 'solving' names, as closing your quest. You must bring out in each word its practical cash value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution then than as a programme for more work and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing realities *may be changed*." Of the American intolerance for mere scholarship and book-learning, and of the American inability to leave any discovery or any finished product alone without some attempt to "improve" upon it or to put it to some new use, we may cite the following: "When may a truth go into cold storage in the encyclopaedias, and when shall it come out for battle?"

Another very strongly marked characteristic of American life is the thoroughly eclectic and composite character of its general culture and of the general tone of its public life. American daily life has become, as it were, a kind of social solvent, a huge melting-pot for the culture and the habits and the customs of peoples from all over the earth. This also may be thought of as reflected in the confessedly complex and amalgam-like character of Pragmatism, in its boast and profession of being a synthesis and a fusion of so many different tendencies of human thought. As a juxtaposition, or kind of compound solution, of such a variety of things as the affirmations of religion, the hypothetical method of science, realism, romanticism, idealism, utilitarianism, and so on, it reminds .



us only too forcibly of the endless number of social groups and traditions, the endless number of interests and activities and projects to be seen and felt in any large American city.

Still another general characteristic of American life of which we may well think in connexion with Pragmatism is the sociological interest of the country, the pressure of which upon the pragmatists and their writings has already been referred to. The social problem in America has now become<sup>1</sup> the one problem that is present with everybody, and present most of all, perhaps, with the European immigrant, who has for various reasons hoped that he had left this problem behind him. The effect of this upon Pragmatism is to be seen, not merely in the very living hold that it is inclined to take of philosophy and philosophical problems,<sup>2</sup> but in the fact of its boast of being a "way of living" as well as a "way of thinking." We have examined this idea in our remarks upon the ethics of Pragmatism.

Of course the outstanding temperamental American characteristic that is most clearly seen in Pragmatism is the great fact of the inevitable bent of the American mind to action and to accomplishment,—its positive inability to entertain any idea, or any set of ideas upon any subject whatsoever, without experiencing at the same

<sup>1</sup> The crucial characteristics of the Presidential campaign of 1912 clearly showed this.

<sup>2</sup> We can see this in the many valuable studies and addresses of Professor Dewey upon educational and social problems.



time the inclination to use these ideas for invention and contrivance,<sup>1</sup> for organization and exploitation. Any one who has lived in the United States must in fact have become so habituated and so accustomed to think of his thought and his knowledge and his capacities in terms of their possible social utility, that he simply cannot refrain from judging of any scheme of thought or of any set of ideas in the same light. Anywhere, to be sure, in the United States will they allow a man to think all he pleases about anything whatsoever—even pre-Socratic philosophy, say, or esoteric Buddhism. And there is nothing indeed of which the country is said, by those who know it best, to stand so much in need as the most persistent and the most profound thought about all important matters. But such thought, it is always added, must prove to be constructive and positive in character, to be directed not merely to the solution of useless questions or of questions which have long ago been settled by others.

We shall now endeavour to think of the value<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is this fact, or the body of fact and tendency upon which it rests, that causes Americans and all who know them or observe them, to think and speak of the *apparently* purely "economic" or "business-like" character of the greater part of their activities. Let me quote Professor Bliss Perry here . . . "*the overwhelming preponderance of the unmitigated business-man face* [italics mine], the consummate monotonous commonness of the pushing male crowd" (p. 158). "There exists, in other words, *in all classes of American society to-day*, just as there existed during the Revolution, during the 'transcendental' movement, in the Civil War, an immense mass of unspiritualised, unvalued American manhood and womanhood" (p. 160).

<sup>2</sup> And this despite of what I have called elsewhere the comparative failure of Pragmatism to give a rational, and tenable account of "personality" and of the "self."

to philosophy and to the thought and practice of the world (the two things are inseparable) of some or all of these general and special characteristics which we have sought to illustrate in Pragmatism.

We might begin by suggesting the importance to the world of the production and development of a man of genius like James,<sup>1</sup> whose fresh and living presentation of the problems of philosophy (as seen by a psychologist) has brought the sense of a lasting and far-reaching obligation upon his fellow-students everywhere. In no more favourable soil could James have grown up into the range and plenitude of his influence than in that of America and of Harvard University,<sup>2</sup> that great

<sup>1</sup> At the moment of his death (*scribens est mortuus*) James was undoubtedly throughout the world the most talked-about English-speaking philosopher, and nowhere more so than in Germany, the home of the transcendentalism that he so doughtily and brilliantly attacked. Stein says, for example, in his article upon "Pragmatism" (*Archiv für Philosophie*, 14, 1907, II. Ab.), that we "have had nothing like it since Schopenhauer." I have often thought that James and his work, along with the life and work of other notable American thinkers (and along with the "lead" that America now certainly has over at least England in some departments of study, like political and economic science, experimental psychology, and so on), are part of the debt America owed, some decades ago, to the Old World in the matter of the training of many of her best professors—a debt she has long since cancelled and overpaid. Readers, by the way, who desire more authentic information about James and his work than the present writer is either capable, or desirous, of giving in this book, may peruse either the recent work of Professor Perry of Harvard upon *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, or the work of M. Flournoy already spoken of. Boutroux has a fine appreciation of the value of James's philosophical work in the work to which I have already referred. And there was naturally a crop of invaluable articles upon James in the American reviews shortly after his death.

<sup>2</sup> Think alone, for example, of what James says he learnt there from a teacher like Agassiz: "The hours I spent with Agassiz so taught me

nursing-ground of the finest kind of American imperialism. The great thing, of course, about James was his invasion, through the activities of his own personality,<sup>1</sup> of the realm of philosophical rationalism by the fact and the principle of active personality. His whole general activity was a living embodiment of the principle of all humanism, that personality and the various phases of personal experience are of more importance to philosophy in the way of theory than any number of supposedly self-coherent, rational or abstract systems, than any amount of reasoning that is determined solely by the ideal of conceptual consistency.

Then again, it might be held that the entire academic world of to-day has a great deal to learn from the conditions under which all subjects (philosophy included) are taught and investigated in the typical American university of the day. We have referred to the fact that the American professor or investigator faces the work of instruc-

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the difference between all possible abstractionists and all lovers in the light of the world's concrete fulness that I have never been able to forget it."—From an article upon James in the *Journal of Philosophy*, ix. p. 527.

<sup>1</sup> While this book was passing through the press my eye fell upon the following words of Professor Santayana in respect of this very personality of James: "It was his personal spontaneity, similar to that of Emerson, and his personal vitality similar to that of nobody else. Conviction and ideas came to him, so to speak, from the subsoil. He had a prophetic sympathy with the dawning sentiments of the age, with the moods of the dumb majority. His way of thinking and feeling represents the true America, and represented in a measure the whole ultra-modern radical world" (*Winds of Doctrine*, p. 205).

tion and research in an environment replete with all modern facilities and conveniences.<sup>1</sup> The very existence of this environment along with the presence throughout his country of university men and workers from all over the world with all their obvious merits and defects as "social types" prevent him in a hundred ways from that slavery to some one school of thought, to some one method of research that is so often a characteristic of the scholar of the old world. The entire information and scholarship in any one science (say, philosophy) is worth to him what he can make of it, here and now, for himself and for his age and for his immediate environment. He simply cannot think of any idea or any line of reflection, in his own or in any other field, without thinking at the same time of its "consequences," immediate, secondary, and remote. This inability is an instance of the working of the pragmatist element

<sup>1</sup> Including, say, the facilities of a completely indexed and authenticated estimate of the work that has been done in different countries upon his particular subject. It is easy to see that the habit and the possibility of work in an environment such as this [and again and again its system and its facilities simply stagger the European] is a thing of the greatest value to the American professor so far as the idea of his own best possible contribution to his age is concerned. Should he merely do over again what others have done? Or shall he try to work in a really new field? Or shall he give himself to the work of real teaching, to the training of competent men, or to the "organization" of his subject with his public? It must be admitted, I think, that the average American professor is a better teacher and guide in his subject than his average colleague in many places in Europe. Hence the justifiable discontent of many American students with what they occasionally find abroad in the way of academic facilities for investigation and advanced study.

in scholarship and in thought with all its advantages and disadvantages.<sup>1</sup>

And it is true too, it might be held, even upon the principles of Idealism that the mere facts of knowledge (for they are as endless in number as are the different points of view from which we may perceive and analyse phenomena) are "worth" <sup>2</sup> to-day very largely only what they have meant and what they may yet mean to human life, to human thought, to civilization. While there is certainly no useless truth and no utterly unimportant fact, it is quite possible to burden and hamper the mind of youth with supposed truths and facts that have little or no relevancy to any coherent or any real point of view about human knowledge and human interests either of the past or the present. It is merely, for example, in the light of the effects that they have had upon the life and thought of humanity <sup>3</sup> that the great

<sup>1</sup> The latter (it is perhaps needless to state) have long been perfectly evident to all American teachers of the first rank in the shape, say, of the worthless "research" that is often represented in theses and studies handed in for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, or for other purposes. Anything that seems to be "work done," anything that has attained to some "consequences" or other, has often been published as studies and researches, and this despite the valuable things that are to be associated with the idea of the pragmatist element in American scholarship. The faults, too, of the undue specialization that still obtains in many American institutions is also, as I have indicated, becoming more and more apparent to American authorities.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot see why idealists should have been so slow to accord to Pragmatism the element of truth in this idea, and to admit that it connects the pragmatist philosophy of "consequences" with the idealist "value-philosophy."

<sup>3</sup> The greater part, for example, of our British teaching and writing about Kant and Hegel has taken little or no recognition of the



philosophical systems of the past ought (after the necessary period of preliminary study on the part of the pupil) to be presented to students in university lectures. A teacher who cannot set them forth in this spirit is really not a teacher at all—a man who can make his subject live again in the thought of the present.<sup>1</sup>

If the limits of our space and our subject permitted of the attempt, we might easily continue the study of the pragmatist element in American scholarship from the point of view of the whole general economy of a university as a social institution, and from that of the benefit that has accrued to the modern world from the many successful attempts at the organization of knowledge from an international point of view, that have come into being under American initiative.<sup>2</sup>

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peculiar intellectual and social atmosphere under which Criticism and Transcendentalism became intelligible and influential in Germany and elsewhere, or of the equally important matter of the very different ways in which the Kantian and the Hegelian philosophies were interpreted by different schools and different tendencies of thought. A similar thing might, I think, too, be said of the unduly "intellectualistic" manner in which the teachings of Plato and Aristotle have often been presented to our British students—under the influence partly of Hegelianism and partly of the *doctrinairism* and the intellectualism of our academic Humanism since the time of the Renaissance. Hence the great importance in Greek philosophy of such a recent work as that of F. M. Cornford upon the relation of Religion to Philosophy (*From Religion to Philosophy*, Arnold, 1912), or of Professor Burnet's well-known *Early Greek Philosophy*.

<sup>1</sup> As suggestive of the scant respect for authorities felt by the active-minded American student, I may refer to the boast of Papini that Pragmatism appeals to the virile and the proud-spirited who do not wish to accept their thought from the past.

<sup>2</sup> I am thinking of such events as the "World's Parliament of



Lastly it is surely impossible to exaggerate the value to philosophy of the so-called "democratic,"<sup>1</sup> open-minded attitude of Pragmatism that is seen in its unprejudiced recognition of such things as the ordinary facts of life, the struggle that constitutes the life of the average man, the fragmentary and partial<sup>2</sup> character of most of our

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Religions" (in Chicago in 1893), the recent international conferences upon "ethical instruction in different countries," upon "racial problems," upon "missions," etc. It would be idle to think that such attempts at the organisation of the knowledge and the effort of the thinking people in the world are quite devoid of philosophical importance. One has only to study, say, von Hartmann, or modern social reform, to be convinced of the contrary.

<sup>1</sup> I trust I may be pardoned if I venture to suggest that in opposition to the democratic attitude of Pragmatism to the ordinary facts of life, and to the ordinary (but often heroic) life of ordinary men, the view of man and the universe that is taken in such an important idealistic book as Dr. Bosanquet's *Individuality and Value* is doubtless unduly aristocratic or intellectualistic. It speaks rather of the Greek view of life than of the modern democratic view. As an expression of the *quasi* democratic attitude of James even in philosophy, we may cite the following: "In this real world of sweat and dirt, it seems to me that when a view of things is noble, that ought to count as a presumption against its truth, as a philosophical disqualification. The Prince of Darkness may be a gentleman, as we are told he is, but whatever the God of earth and heaven is, he can surely be no gentleman. His menial services are needed in the dust of our human trials."

Having rewritten this quotation two or three times, I have lost the reference to its place in James's writings. It is one of the three books upon Pragmatism and Pluralism.]

<sup>2</sup> We may quote, I think, the following passage from Professor Perry to show that the open-mindedness of James was not merely a temperamental and an American characteristic in his case, but a quality or attitude that rested upon an intellectual conviction in respect of the function of ideas. "Since it is their office [*i.e.* the office of ideas] to pave the way for direct knowledge, or to be temporarily substituted for it, then efficiency is conditioned by their *unobtrusiveness, by the readiness with which they subordinate themselves*. The commonest case of an idea in James's sense is the word, and the most notable example of his pragmatic or empirical method is his own scrupulous avoidance of verbalism. It follows that since ideas are in and of themselves of

knowledge, and so on. All this contrasts in the most favourable way with the scholastic and the Procrustean attitude to facts that has so long characterized philosophical rationalism from Leibniz and Wolff to the Kantians and to the Neo-Kantians and the Neo-Hegelians of our own time. Thanks partly to this direct and democratic attitude of mind on the part of the pragmatists and humanists, and thanks too to the entire psychological and sociological movement of modern times, the points of view of the different leading thinkers of different countries are beginning to receive their fitting recognition in the general economy of human thought to be compared with each other, and with still other possible points of view.

No one, it seems to me, can read the books of James without feeling that philosophy can again, as the universal science indeed, "begin anywhere" in a far less restricted sense than that in which Hegel interpreted this ingenious saying of his in respect of the freedom of human thinking.<sup>1</sup>

As for the inevitable drawbacks and limitations of the very Americanism which we have been

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no cognitive value, since they are essentially instrumental, they are *always on trial*, and 'liable to modification in the course of future experience.'"—*Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 364 (italics mine).

<sup>1</sup> It is known to all students that some of the more important writings of this prince of thinkers cannot be intelligibly approached without a long preliminary study of the peculiar "dressing up," or transformation, to which he subjects the various facts of life and existence. And the same thing is true (to a more modified extent) of the writings of Kant.

endeavouring to discover in Pragmatism, it cannot, to begin with, be entirely without an element of risk to philosophy, and to the real welfare of a country, that the highest kind of insight should be brought too ruthlessly into competition with the various specialized studies, and the various utilitarian<sup>1</sup> pursuits of modern times, and with popular tendencies generally. The public, for many reasons, should not be too readily encouraged to think of philosophy as merely "a" study like other studies and pursuits, to be baited with the idea of its utility and its profitable consequences. Philosophy, on the contrary, is the universal study that gives to all other studies and pursuits their relative place and value. If left too much to be a mere matter of choice on the part of the young and the unthinking, it will soon find itself in the neglected position of the wisdom that utters her voice at the street corners. It must be secured an integral, and even a necessary place in the world of instruction—a condition that is still the case, it is to be remembered, in Catholic<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the wise remark, in this very connexion, of the possible service of philosophy to-day, of Dr. Bosanquet, reproduced upon p. 226. And then, again, we must remember that an unduly pragmatist view of life would tend to make people impervious to ideas that transcend the range and the level of their ordinary interests and activities.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the following from Professor Pace's Preface to *Introduction to Philosophy*, by Charles A. Dubray. "In Catholic colleges, importance has always been attached to the study of philosophy both as a means of culture and as a source of information regarding the great truths which are influential in supporting Christian belief and in shaping character." Of course these same words might be used as descriptive of what Professor Santayana calls the "older tradition" in all American colleges. It is interesting, by the way, to note also the pragmatist

as distinguished from many so-called "liberal" and "Protestant" seats of learning.

It is possible indeed, as we have already suggested, that the recognition of an aristocratic or a Catholic element in learning would, in some respects, be of more true use in the schools of America than a mere pragmatist philosophy of life and education. And it is therefore not to be wondered at that Americans themselves should already have expressed something of a distrust for a philosophy and an educational policy that are too akin to the practical commercialism of the hour.<sup>1</sup>

Then again, despite the large element of truth that there is in the idea of philosophy "discovering" (rather than itself "being") the true "dynamic" or "motive-awakening" view of the system of things in which we live, philosophy itself was never intended to bear the entire weight and strain that are put upon it by the pragmatists. In their enthusiasm they would make out of it, as we have seen, a religion (and a new one at that!) and a social philosophy, as well as the theory of knowledge and the "approach" to reality that we are accustomed to look for in a system of philosophy.

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touch in the same Preface to this Catholic manual. "But if this training is to be successful, philosophy must be presented, not as a complex of abstruse speculations on far-off inaccessible topics, but as a system of truths that enter with vital consequence into our ordinary thinking and our everyday conduct."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 136.

It is only in periods of transition and reconstruction, like the present age, when men have become acutely sensible of the limitations of traditional views of things, that they are inclined in their disappointment to look to scientific and professional thinkers for creeds that shall take the place of what they seem for the moment to be losing. It is in such times chiefly that philosophy flourishes, and that it is apt to acquire an undue importance by being called upon to do things that of itself it cannot do. Among the latter impossibilities is to be placed, for example, the idea of its being able to offer (almost in any sense) a substitute for the direct experience<sup>1</sup> of the common life, or for the realities of our affections and our emotions, or for the ideals engendered by the common life.

Owing partly to the limitations of the Intellectualism that has hitherto characterized so much of the culture and the educational policy of the last century there are still everywhere scores of people under the illusion that the truth of life will be revealed to them in the theory of some book, in the new views or the new gospel of some emancipated and original thinker. In this vain hope of theirs they are obviously forgetful of even the pragmatist truth that all theories are but a kind of transformation, or abstract expression, of the experiences of real life and of real living. And part of the trouble with the pragmatists is

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 34 and p. 165.



that they themselves have unwittingly ministered to this mistaken attitude of mind by creating the impression that their theory of taking the kingdom of Heaven by storm, by the violence of their postulations and of their plea for a "working view" of things, is indeed the new gospel of which men have long been in search. The race, however, is not always to the swift and the eager, nor the kingdom to those who are loudest in their cryings of "Lord, Lord." And as a friend of mine aptly applied it as against all practicalism and Pragmatism, "there remaineth a rest to the people of God."<sup>1</sup> The ordinary man, it should be borne in mind, does not in a certain sense really need philosophy. Its audience is with the few, and it is to do it but scant service to think of making it attractive to the many by the obliteration of most of its distinctive characteristics and difficulties, and by the failure to point out its inherent limitations. It is not by any means, as we have been indicating, a substitute either for life, or for positive religion. Nor can it ever have much of a message, even for the few, if they imagine themselves, on account of their wisdom, to be elevated above the needs of the ordinary discipline of life.

Then again, there is surely an element of considerable danger in the American-like depreciation

<sup>1</sup> It is not, however, "rest" that the pragmatists want, even in heaven, but renewed opportunities for achievement. "'There shall be news,' W. James was fond of saying with rapture, quoting from the unpublished poem of a new friend, 'there shall be news in heaven.'" —Professor Santayana in *Winds of Doctrine*, p. 209.



of doctrine and theory which we have noticed in two or three different connexions on the part of Pragmatism. In the busy, necessitous life of the United States this depreciation<sup>1</sup> is sometimes said to be visible in the great sacrifice of life<sup>2</sup> and energy that is continually taking place there owing to an unduly literal acceptance on the part of every one of the idea that each individual has a sort of divine right to seek and to interpret his experience for himself. In Pragmatism it might be said to be illustrated in the comparative weakness in the essentials of logic and ethics to which we have already referred, in the matter of a sound theory of first principles. And also in its failure to take any really critical recognition<sup>3</sup> of the question of its theoretical and practical affiliations to tendencies new and old, many or

<sup>1</sup> In using this expression I am acutely conscious of its limitations and of its misleading character. There is nothing in which Americans so thoroughly believe as *knowledge* and *instruction* and *information*. A belief in education is in fact *the one prevailing religion of the country*—the one thing in which *all* classes, without any exception, unfeignedly believe, and for which the entire country makes enormous sacrifices.

<sup>2</sup> In using this expression I am not blind to such outstanding characteristics of American life as (1) the enormous amount of preventive philanthropy that exists in the United States; (2) the well-known system of checks in the governmental machinery of the country; (3) the readiness with which Americans fly to legislation for the cure of evils; (4) the American sensitiveness to pain, and their hesitation about the infliction of suffering or punishment, etc. Nor do I forget the sacrifice of life entailed by modern necessities and modern inventions in countries other than America. I simply mean that owing to the constant stream of immigration, and to the spirit of youthfulness that pervades the country, the willingness of people to make experiments with themselves and their lives is one of the many remarkable things about the United States.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 117.

most of which have long ago been estimated at their true worth and value. Then there is its comparatively superficial interpretation<sup>1</sup> of what is known in the thought of the day as "Darwinism" and "Evolutionism" and the endless belief of the unthinking in "progress," and its failure to see that its very Americanism<sup>2</sup> and its very popularity are things that are deserving of the most careful study and criticism. What have the pragmatists left in their hands of their theory, if its mere "methodology" and its "efficiency-philosophy" and its would-be enthusiasm were eliminated from it?

Like Americanism in general (which began, of course, as a revolutionary and a "liberationist" policy), Pragmatism is inclined in some ways to make too much of peoples' rights and interests, and too little of their duties and privileges and of their real needs and their fundamental, human instincts. It is in the understanding alone of these latter things that true wisdom and true satisfaction<sup>3</sup> are to be found. And like the American demand for pleasure

<sup>1</sup> And this despite the enormous amount of work that has been done by American biologists upon the "factors" of evolution, and upon a true interpretation of Darwinism and of Weismannism and of the evolutionary theory generally.

<sup>2</sup> Even Professor James, for example, dismissed (far too readily, in my opinion) as a "sociological romance" a well-known book (published both in French and in English) by Professor Schinz entitled *Anti-Pragmatism*. Although in some respects a superficial and exaggerated piece of work, this book did discover certain important things about Pragmatism and about its relation to American life.

<sup>3</sup> It is probably a perception of this truth that has led Dr. Bosanquet

and for a good time generally, Pragmatism is in many respects too much a mere philosophy of "postulations" and "demands," too much a mere formulation of the eager and impetuous demands of the emancipated man and woman of the time—as forgetful as they of many of the deeper<sup>1</sup> facts of life and of the economy of our human civilization. In demanding that the "consequences" of all pursuits (even those of study and philosophy) shall be "satisfying," and that philosophy shall satisfy our active nature, it forgets the sense of disillusionment that comes to all rash and mistaken effort. It certainly does not follow that a man is going to get certain things from the world and from philosophy merely because he demands them any more than does the *discovery* and the *possession* of happiness follow from the "right"<sup>2</sup> of the individual to seek it in his own best way. Nor is it even true that man is called upon to "act" to anything like the extent contemplated by an unduly enthusiastic Americanism and an

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to express the opinion that the whole pragmatist issue may be settled by an examination of the notion of "satisfaction." He must mean, I think, that satisfaction is impossible to man without a recognition of many of the ideal factors that are almost entirely neglected by the pragmatists—except by Bergson, if it be fair to call him a pragmatist.

<sup>1</sup> Bourdeau, for example, has suggested that its God is not really God, but merely an old domestic servant destined to do us personal services—help us to carry our trunk and our cross in the midst of sweat and dirt. He is not a gentleman even. "No wonder," he adds, "it was condemned at Rome." See his *Pragmatisme et Modernisme*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> I am thinking here of the words in the Constitution of the State of California (they are printed in Mr. Bryce's *American Commonwealth*—at least in the earlier editions) to the effect that it is the natural right of all men to seek and to "obtain [!]" happiness.

unduly enthusiastic Pragmatism. The writer is glad to be able to append in this connexion a quotation taken by an American critic of Pragmatism from Forberg in his criticism of the action-philosophy of Fichte: "Action, action, is the vocation of man! Strictly speaking, this principle is false. Man is not called upon to act, but to act justly. If he cannot act without acting unjustly he had better remain inactive."

It would not be difficult to match this quotation, or perhaps to surpass it, with something from Carlyle in respect of the littleness of man's claims, not merely for enjoyment, but even for existence; but we will pass on.

Pragmatism, as we have suggested, certainly falls too readily into line with the tendency of the age to demand means and instruments and utilities and working satisfactions, instead of ends and purposes and values, to demand pleasure and enjoyment instead of happiness and blessedness. Instead of allowing itself to do this it should have undertaken a criticism both of the so-called "wants" of the age, and of the soundness of its own views in respect of the truth and the happiness that are proper to man as man. There is a fine epigram of Goethe's in respect of the limitations of the revolutionary and the liberationist attitude of those who would seek to "free" men without first trying to understand them, and to help them to their true inward development.

Alle Freiheits-Apostel, sie waren mir immer zuwider.  
Willkur suchte doch nur jeder am Ende für sich.  
Willst du viele befreien, so wag' es vielen zu dienen.  
Wie gefährlich das sey, willst du es wissen? Versuch's.<sup>1</sup>

Until Pragmatism then makes it clear that it is the free rational activity, and the higher spiritual nature of man that is to it the norm of all our thought, and all our activity, and the true test of all "consequences," it has not risen to the height of the distinctive message that it is capable of giving to the thought of the present time. Unqualified by some of the ideal considerations to which we have attempted, in its name, and in its interest, to give an expression, it would not be, for example, a philosophy that could be looked upon by the great East as the last word of our Western wisdom or our Western experience. It will be well, however, to say nothing more in this connexion until we have looked at the considerations that follow (in our next chapter) upon the lofty, but impersonal, idealisation of the life and thought of man attempted by our Anglo-Hegelian Rationalism, and until we have reflected, too, upon the more feasible form of Idealism attempted in the remarkable philosophy of Bergson,<sup>2</sup> the greatest of all the pragmatists.

<sup>1</sup> "*Epigramme*," Venice, 1790. ["I could never abide any of those freedom-gospelers. All that they ever wanted was to get things running so as to suit themselves. If you are anxious to set people free, just make a beginning by trying to serve them. The simplest attempt will teach you how dangerous this effort may be."]

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IX.



## CHAPTER VIII

### PRAGMATISM AND ANGLO-HEGELIAN RATIONALISM

THE form of Anglo-German Rationalism or Intellectualism which I shall venture to select for the purposes of consideration from the point of view of Pragmatism and Humanism is the first volume of the recent *Gifford Lectures* of Dr. Bernard Bosanquet, who has long been regarded by the philosophical public of Great Britain as one of the most characteristic members of a certain section of our Neo-Hegelian school. I shall first give the barest outline of the argument and contentions of "The Principle of Individuality and Value," and then venture upon some paragraphs of what shall seem to me to be relevant criticism.

Dr. Bosanquet's initial position is a conception of philosophy, and its task which is for him and his book final and all-determining. To him Philosophy is (as it is to some extent to Hegel) "logic" or "the spirit of totality." It is "essentially of the concrete and the whole," as Science is of the "abstract and the part." Although the best thing



in life is not necessarily "philosophy," philosophy in this sense of "logic" is the clue to "reality and value and freedom," the key to everything, in short, that we can, or that we should, or that we actually do desire and need. It [philosophy] is "a rendering in coherent thought of what lies at the heart of actual life and love." His next step is to indicate "the sort of things," or the sort of "experiences," or the sort of "facts" that philosophy needs as its material, if it would accomplish its task as "universal logic." This he does (1) negatively, by the rejection of any form of "immediateness," or "simple apprehension," such as the "solid fact," the "sense of being," or the "unshareable self" of which we sometimes seem to hear, or such as the "naïve ideas" of "compensating justice,"<sup>1</sup> "ethics"<sup>2</sup> which treats the individual as isolated" and "teleology"<sup>3</sup> as "guidance by finite minds," as the data (or as part of the data) of philosophy; and (2) positively, by declaring

<sup>1</sup> On what grounds does Professor Bosanquet think of "compensating justice" as a naïve idea? It is on the contrary one of the highest and deepest, and one of the most comprehensive to which the human mind has ever attained—giving rise to the various theogonies and theodicies and religious systems of mankind. It is at the bottom, for example, of the theodicy and the philosophy of Leibniz, the founder of the Rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe.

<sup>2</sup> Could any system of ethics which took such an impossible and such a belated conception of the individual be regarded as ethics at all?

<sup>3</sup> I do not think that this is a fair preliminary description of the problem of teleology. A person who believes in the realization of purpose in some experiences with which he thinks himself to be acquainted does not plead for the guidance of the universe by finite minds, but simply for a view of it that shall include the truth of human purposes. And of course there may be in the universe beings other than ourselves who also realize purposes.

that his subject-matter throughout will be "the principle of 'individuality,' of 'self-completeness,' as the clue to reality." This "individuality" or "self-completeness" is then set forth in a quasi-Platonic manner as the "universal," the real "universal" being (he insists) the "concrete universal," the "whole," that is to say, "the logical system of connected members," that is to him the "ideal of all thought." We must think of this "individuality," therefore, either as "a living world, complete and acting out of itself, a positive, self-moulding cosmos," or "as a definite *striving of the universe*" [!]<sup>1</sup>

The next question (so far as our partial purposes are concerned) that Dr. Bosanquet asks is, "What help do we get from the notion of a 'mind' which 'purposes' or 'desires' things in appreciating the work of factors in the universe, or of the universe as [*ex-hypothesis*] self-directing and self-experiencing whole?" The answer is spread over several chapters, and is practically this, that although there is undoubtedly a "teleology" in the universe (in the shape of the "conjunctures and results of the co-operation of men," or of "the harmony of geological and biological evolution"), and although "minds such as ours play a part in the work of direction, we cannot judge of this work in question in any human manner." The real test of teleology or value is "wholeness," "completeness," "individuality" [the topic of

<sup>1</sup> Italics and exclamation mine.

the book], and it is made quite clear that it is the "Absolute" who is "real" and "individual" and not we. We are, indeed, in our lives "*carried to the Absolute without a break*,"<sup>1</sup> and our nature "*is only in process of being communicated to us*."<sup>2</sup> "We should not think of ourselves after the pattern of separate things or personalities in the legal sense, nor even as selves in the sense of isolation and exclusion of others." "Individuality" being this "logical self-completeness," there can be only one "Individual," and this one Individual is the one criterion of "value," or "reality," or "existence," "importance" and "*reality* [*!*]" being sides of the one "characteristic" [*i.e.* "thinkableness" as a whole]. Dr. Bosanquet confesses in his seventh chapter that this idea of his of "individuality," or "reality," is essentially the Greek idea that it is only the "whole nature" of things that gives them their reality or value.

We are then assured, towards the close of this remarkable book, that "freedom" (the one thing

<sup>1</sup> Italics mine. There is a large element of truth in this great idea of Professor Bosanquet's, connecting [for our purposes] his philosophy with the theism and the personalism for which we are contending as the only true and real basis for Humanism.

<sup>2</sup> Readers who remember Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* will remember that it is one of the difficulties of that remarkable, but one-sided, production (exposed, I think, with many other defects in Professor Taylor's brilliant, but unduly intellectualistic *Problem of Conduct*) that it also seems to teach a kind of "Determinism" in ethics, in what our nature is unduly communicated to us by the Absolute, or the "Eternal Consciousness." This whole way of looking at things must largely be abandoned to-day.

that we mortals value as the greatest of all "goods") is "*the inherent effort of mind considered as a* [!] *world*, and that the "Absolute" [the "universal" of logic, Plato's "Idea"] is the "high-water mark of our effort," and that each "self" is "more like *a rising and a falling tide* than an isolated pillar with a fixed circumference." The great fact of the book, the fact upon which its accomplished author rests when he talks in his Preface of his belief, "that in the main the work [of philosophy] has been done," is the daily "transmutation of experience according to the level of the mind's energy and self-completeness," the continued and the continuous "self-interpretation [of 'experience'] through the fundamental principle of individuality."

Now it is quite obvious that according to many of the considerations that have been put forward as true in the foregoing chapters, this philosophy of Dr. Bosanquet's which treats the "concept," or the "universal" as an end in itself (as the *one answer* to all possible demands for a "teleology") and as an "individual," "*a perfected and self-perfecting* [!] *individual*," can be regarded as but another instance of the abstract Rationalism against which Pragmatism and Humanism have entered their protests. It is untrue, therefore, to the real facts of knowledge and the real facts of human nature. It will be sufficient to state that the considerations of which we are thinking are (in the main) the positions that have

been taken in respect of such things as : (1) the claim that a true metaphysic must serve not merely as an intellectual "system" but as a "dynamic," and as a "motive" for action and achievement ; (2) the fact of the "instrumental" character of thought and of ideas, and of all systems (of science or of philosophy or of politics) that fail to include as part of their data the various ideals of mankind ; (3) the idea that all truth and all thought imply a belief in the existence of objects and persons independent of the mere mental states or activities of the thinking individual, and that belief rather than knowledge is, and always has been, man's fundamental and working estimate of reality ; (4) the fact that our human actions and re-actions upon reality are a part of what we mean by "reality," and that these actions and re-actions of ours are real and not imaginary ; (5) the attitude in general of Pragmatism to Rationalism ; (6) the various concessions that have been made by representative rationalists to the pragmatist movement.

Dr. Bosanquet's theory of reality has already impressed some of his most competent critics as utterly inadequate as a motive or an incentive to the efforts and endeavours of men as we know them in history and in actual life, and we shall immediately return to this topic. And although there are many signs in his Lectures that he is himself quite aware of the probability of such an



impression, his book proceeds upon the even tenor of its way, following wherever his argument may lead him, irrespective entirely of the truth contained in the facts and the positions we have just recounted and reaffirmed. It lends itself, therefore, only too naturally to our present use of it as a highly instructive presentation of many, or most, of the tendencies of Rationalism and Intellectualism, against which Pragmatism and Humanism would fain protest. At the same time there is in it, as we hope to show, a fundamental element<sup>1</sup> of truth and of fact without which there could be no Pragmatism and no Humanism, and indeed no philosophy at all.

A broad, pervading inconsistency<sup>2</sup> in "In-

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> It is, I am inclined to think, the existence of this contradiction in Dr. Bosanquet's Lectures that will cause the average intelligent person to turn away from them as not affording an adequate account of the reality of the world of persons and things with which he knows himself to be directly and indirectly acquainted. Another way of stating the same thing would be to say that Absolutism fails to take any adequate recognition of that most serious contradiction (or "defect") in our experience of which we have already spoken as the great dualism of modern times, the opposition between reason and faith an opposition that is not relieved either by the greatest of the continually increasing discoveries of science, or by any, or all, of the systems of all the thinkers. Hegelianism in general assures us that from the point of view of a "higher synthesis" this opposition does not exist or that it is somehow "transcended." And its method of effecting this synthesis is to convert the opposition between faith and reason into the opposition between what it calls "Understanding" and what it calls "Reason" [an opposition that is to some extent a fictitious one, "reason" being, to begin with, but another name for our power of framing general conceptions or notions, and not therefore different from "understanding"]. It removes, that is to say, the opposition between two different phases or aspects of our experience by denying the existence of one of them altogether. It changes the opposition between knowledge and



dividuality and Value" which militates somewhat seriously against the idea of its being regarded as a tenable philosophy, is the obvious one between the position (1) that true reality is necessarily individual, and the position (2) that reality is to be found in the "universal" (or the "concept") of logic.<sup>1</sup> It would, however, perhaps be unfair to expect Dr. Bosanquet to effect a

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faith into an opposition between an alleged lower and an alleged higher way of *knowing*. This alleged higher way of knowing, however, is, when we look into it, but the old ideal of the perfect demonstration of *all the supposed contents* of our knowledge (principles and facts alike) that has haunted modern philosophy from the time of Descartes. It is an unattainable ideal because no philosophy in the world can begin without some assumption (either of "fact" or of principle), and because our knowledge of the world comes to us in a piecemeal fashion—under the conditions of time and space. A fact prior to all the issues of the demand of Rationalism for a supposedly perfect demonstration is the *existence of the conscious beings* (Dr. Bosanquet himself, for example) who seek this supposed certainty in order that they may act better—in ignorance of the fact that complete initial certainty on our part as to all the issues and aspects of our actions would tend to destroy the personal character of our choice as moral agents, as beings who may occasionally act beyond the given and the calculable, and set up precedents and ideals for ourselves and for others—for humanity. It is this underlying faith then in the reality of our moral and spiritual nature that we would alone oppose (and only in a relative sense) to the supposed certainties of a completely rational, or *a-priori*, demonstration, the whole contention of humanism being that it is in the interests of the former reality that the latter certainties exist. The apparent opposition between faith and reason would be surmounted by a philosophy that should make consciousness of ourselves *as persons* the primal certainty, and all other forms of consciousness or of knowledge secondary and tributary, as it were, to this.

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that there is a difference between the "universal" of ordinary formal logic and Dr. Bosanquet's (or Hegel's) "concrete universal," but it is needless for me to think of it here. Dr. Bosanquet uses in his Lectures the phrase "logical universal" for his "concrete universal" or his principle of positive coherence. It is always logical coherence that he has in view.

harmony between these two positions that Aristotle (who held them both) was himself very largely unable to do. There is, in other words, a standing and a lasting contradiction between any and all philosophy which holds that it is *reason* [or *logic*] *alone that attains to truth* and reality, and the apparently natural and inevitable tendency of the human mind [it is represented in Dr. Bosanquet's own procedure] to seek after "reality" in the "individual" thing, or person, or being, and in the perfecting of "individuality" in God (or in a kingdom of perfected individuals).

The positive errors, however, which we would venture to refer to as even more fatal to Dr. Bosanquet's book than any of its incidental inconsistencies are those connected with the following pieces of procedure on his part: (1) his manifest tendency to treat the "universal" as if it were an entity on its own account with a sort of development and "value" and "culmination" of its own;<sup>1</sup> (2) his tendency to talk and think as if a "characteristic" or a "predicate" (*i.e.* the "characteristic" or "quality" that some experiencing being or some thinker attributes to reality) could be treated as anything at all *apart from the action and the reaction of this "experient"*

<sup>1</sup> "For everywhere it is creative Logic, the nature of the whole working in the detail, which constitutes experience, and is appreciable in so far as experience has value." Now Logic of itself does not thus "work" or "do" anything. It is men or persons who do things by the help of logic and reasoning and other things—realities and forces, etc.

(or "thinker") *conceived as an agent*; (3) the tendency to talk of "minds"<sup>1</sup> *rather than persons*, as "purposing" and "desiring" things; (4) his tendency to talk as if "teleology" were "wholeness"; (5) his tendency to regard (somewhat in the manner of Spinoza) "selves" and "persons" as like "rising and falling tides," and of the self as a "world of content"<sup>2</sup> engaged in certain "transformations"; and (6) his tendency to think and speak *as if demonstration* ["mediation" is perhaps his favourite way of thinking of the logical process] *were an end in itself, as if we lived to think, instead of thinking to live.*

In opposition to all this it may be affirmed firstly that every "conception" of the human mind is but the more or less clear consciousness of a *disposition to activity*, and is representative, not so much of the "features" of objects which might appear to be their "characteristics" from a purely theoretical point of view, as of the different

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 31. "We are minds," he says, "*i.e.* living microcosms, not with hard and fast limits, but determined by our range and powers which fluctuate very greatly." My point simply is that this is too intellectualistic a conception of man's personality. We have minds, but we are not minds.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 192. "But as the self is essentially a world of content engaged in certain transformations"; and p. 193, "a conscious being . . . is a world . . . in which the Absolute begins to reveal its proper nature." How can a "world of content" [that is to say, the "sphere of discourse" of what some person is thinking for some purpose or other] be "engaged" in certain transformations? It is the *person*, or the thinker, who is transforming the various data of his experience for his purposes as a man among men. It is time that philosophy ceased to make itself ridiculous by calmly writing down such abstractions as if they were facts.

ways in which objects have seemed to men to subserve the needs of their souls and bodies. The study of the development of the "concept" in connexion with the facts of memory and with the slow evolution of language, and with the "socialized percepts" of daily life will all tend to confirm this position. The phenomena of religion, for example, and all the main concepts of all the religions are to be studied *not merely as intellectual phenomena*, as solutions of some of the many difficulties of modern Agnosticism, or of modern Rationalism, or of modern Criticism, but as an expressive of the *modes of behaviour of human beings* (with all their needs and all their ideals) towards the universe in which they find themselves, and towards the various beings, seen and unseen, which this universe symbolises to them. These phenomena and these conceptions are unintelligible, in short, apart from the various activities and cults and social practices and social experiences and what not, with which they have dealt from first to last.

Then it is literally impossible to separate in the manner of Dr. Bosanquet the "predicate" of thought from the active relations sustained by things towards each other, or towards the human beings who seek to interpret these active relations for any or for all "purposes." Dr. Bosanquet's idea, however, of the relation of "mind" to "matter," to use these *symbols* for the nonce (for they are but such), is in the main purely "repre-

sentational"<sup>1</sup> or intellectualistic.<sup>2</sup> To him "mind" seems to reflect either a "bodily content" or some other kind of "content"<sup>3</sup> that seems to exist for a "spectator" of the world, or for the "Absolute," *rather than for the man himself as an agent*, who of course *uses* his memories of himself, or his "ideal" of himself, *for renewed effort and activity*. One of the most important consequences of this unduly intellectualistic view of mind is that Dr. Bosanquet seems (both theoretically and practically) unable to see the place of "mind," as "purpose," in ordinary life,<sup>4</sup> or of the place of mind in evolution,<sup>5</sup> giving us in his difficult but important chapter on the "relation of mind and body" a version of things that approaches only too perilously close to Parallelism or Dualism, or even to Materialism.<sup>6</sup> And along with this quasi-"representational" or "copy-like" theory of mind there are to be associated his representational

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Mind as the significance and interpretation of reality," p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> "Mind has nothing of its own but the active form of totality, everything positive it draws from Nature."

<sup>3</sup> This again is an abstraction, and how on earth can it be said that "mind" and conscious life "reflect" merely certain abstractions (or creations) of their own? They have invented such terms as "content" for certain purposes, and their own being and nature is therefore more than these terms. Mind is not a "content"; it makes all other things "contents" for itself.

<sup>4</sup> It has even there, according to Dr. Bosanquet, only its purely theoretic function of working after its own perfection in the way of attaining to a logical "universal." "The peculiarity of mind for us, is to be a world of experience working itself out towards harmony and completeness." This is simply not true.

<sup>5</sup> "Finite consciousness, whether animal or human, did not make its body."

<sup>6</sup> "Thus there is nothing in mind *which the physical counterpart cannot represent.*" (Italics mine.)



and intellectualistic views of the "self"<sup>1</sup> and the "universal"<sup>2</sup> and "spirit."<sup>3</sup>

There are, doubtless, hints in Dr. Bosanquet's pages of a more "dynamic" view of mind or of a deeper view<sup>4</sup> than this merely "representational" view, but they are not developed or worked into the main portion of his argument, which they would doubtless very largely transform. This is greatly to be regretted, for we remember that even Hegel seemed to notice the splitting-up of the real for our human purposes which takes place in the ordinary judgment. And of course, as we have

<sup>1</sup> "What we call the individual, then, is not a fixed essence, but a living world of content representing a certain range of externality." P. 289.

<sup>2</sup> "The *system of the universe*, as was said in an earlier Lecture, might be described as a *representative system*. Nature, or externality [!] lives in the lives of conscious beings. (*Italics mine.*)

<sup>3</sup> "Spirit is a light, a focus, a significance [!] which can only be by contact with a 'nature' an external world."

<sup>4</sup> "For, on the other hand, it has been urged and we feel, that it is *thought which constructs and sustains the fabric of experience*, and that it is thought-determinations which invest even sense-experience with its *value and its meaning*. . . . The ultimate tendency of thought, we have seen, is not to generalise, but to *constitute a world*," p. 55. Again, "the true office of thought, we begin to see, is to *build up, to inspire with meaning, to intensify, to vivify*. The object which thought, in the true sense, has worked upon, is not a relic of decaying sense, *but is a living world*, analogous to a perception of the beautiful, in which every thought-determination adds fresh point and deeper bearing to every element of the whole," p. 58. And on p. 178 he says that he sees no objection to an idealist recognising the "use made of" "laws" and "*dispositions*" in recent psychology. [How one wishes that Dr. Bosanquet had really worked into his philosophy the idea that every mental "element" is in a sense a "disposition" to *activity*!] Some of these statements of Dr. Bosanquet's have almost a pragmatist ring about them, a suggestion of a *living* and dynamic (rather than a merely intellectualistic) conception of thought. They may therefore be associated by the reader with the concessions to Pragmatism by other rationalists of which we spoke in an early chapter (see p. 74).



noticed, all "purpose" is practical and theoretical at one and the same time.

Then, thirdly, it is persons, and not "minds," who desire and purpose things, "mind" being a concept invented by the spectator of activity in a person other than himself, which (from the analogy of his own conscious activity and experience) he believes to be purposive.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bosanquet's use, too, of the expression "mind" invariably leaves out of the range of consideration the phenomena of desire and volition—intelligible, both of them, only by reference to an end that is to be understood from within, and not from outside of the personality, from the point of view of the mere spectator. The phenomena of desire and volition are just as integral ingredients of our lives as persons as are our cognitive states.

Fourthly, it is doubtful whether the treatment of teleology as "wholeness" (or its sublimation in "Individuality and Value" into "wholeness") is much of an explanation of this difficult topic, or indeed whether it is any explanation at all. Dr. Bosanquet, in fact, confesses that teleology is a conception which "*loses its distinctive meaning* as we deepen its philosophical interpretation, and that it has very little meaning when applied to the universe as a whole" [a thing that is apparent to any Kantian student]. "It is impossible seriously," he says, "to treat a mind *which is the universe* [!] as a workman of limited resources,

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III. p. 90.

aiming at some things and obliged to accept others as means to these." And it is equally impossible, he holds, to apply "to the universe" the distinction of "what is purpose for its own sake and what is not so." In fact, Dr. Bosanquet's treatment of teleology is thus mainly negative, as including not only this rejection<sup>1</sup> of the notion in reference to the "universe as a whole," but its rejection, too, in reference to the purposes of our human life;<sup>2</sup> although he admits (as of course he must) that the conception of end or purpose is drawn from some of the features ("the simplest features," he says) of our "finite life," or "finite consciousness." If the notion were "to be retained at all," he says, "it could only be a name for some principle which would help to tell us what has *value quite independent of being or not being, the purpose of some mind.*"<sup>3</sup> Now, of course, according to the Pragmatism and Humanism that we have been considering in this book, no intelligent person could take any conceivable interest in such a useless fancy as a teleology of this kind. Thus teleology is really blotted out altogether of existence in this volume, and with its disappearance there must go also the notion of any value that might be intelligibly associated with the idea of the

<sup>1</sup> I must say that apart from any questions in detail about this rejection of teleology by Dr. Bosanquet, there is something inexplicable about it to me. He cannot retain his own great notion of "wholeness" without the idea of "end," because "wholeness" is a demand of thought that is guided by some idea of purpose or end.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Italics mine.

attainment of purposes or ends by the human beings with whom we are acquainted in our ordinary daily life.

We shall below<sup>1</sup> refer to the fact that this rejection of teleology and value is one that must be regarded as fatal to ethics or to Absolutism in the realm of ethics. It requires, too, to be added here that even the most unprejudiced reading of Dr. Bosanquet's work must create in the mind of the reader the conviction that its author is altogether unfair to the views of those who believe in the existence of definite manifestations of purpose in human life.<sup>2</sup> He talks as if those who uphold this idea or this fact are committed either to the absurd notion that man is "the end of the universe," or to the equally absurd notion that "art, thought, society, history, in which mind begins to transcend its finiteness should be ascribed to the directive abilities of units in a plurality, precisely apart from the world content and the underlying solidarity of spirits, the medium through which all great things are done."

With a view of bringing our discussion of these striking *Gifford Lectures* within the scope of the general subject of this book the following might be regarded as their leading, fundamental characteristics to which the most serious kind of exception might well be taken: (1) its "abstractionism"<sup>3</sup> and its general *injustice to fact* due to

<sup>1</sup> P. 225.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Having already given instances of this abstractionism in the case

its initial and persistent "conviction"<sup>1</sup> [strange to say, this is the very word used by Bosanquet] that the real movement in things is a "logical" movement; (2) its fallacious conception of the task of philosophy as mainly the obligation to think the world "without contradiction"; (3) its obvious tendency in the direction of the "subjective idealism"<sup>2</sup> that has been the bane of so much modern philosophy and that is discarded altogether<sup>3</sup> by Pragmatism and Humanism; (4) its retention

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of such things as the "self" and the "universal" and "spirit," it will suffice to point out here in addition (1) its tendency to talk of "experience" and "experiences" *as if there could be such things apart from the prior real existence of the experients or the experiencing persons* with whom we are acquainted in our daily life, and (2) its tendency to talk of getting at "the heart of actual life and love" in a "system" which leaves no place for the real existence of either gods or men who live and love. And then I trust that it may not be regarded as an impertinence to allege as another puzzling piece of abstractionism on the part of Dr. Bosanquet, that he has allowed himself to speak and think in his book as if his theory of the "concrete universal" were practically a new thing in the thought of our time—apart altogether, that is to say, from the important work in this same direction of other Neo-Hegelian writers, and apart, too, from the unique work of Hegel in the same connexion.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> This is revealed in the main in its exposition of the world as the logical system of a single complete individual experience—a tendency that students of philosophy know to exist in Neo-Hegelianism generally from Green to Bradley. I admit that this tendency is literally a different thing from solipsism in the ordinary sense, as the inability of a particular finite person to prove to himself that any person or thing exists except himself. It is still, however, it seems to me, possible to regard as solipsistic the tendency to set forth the universe as the experience, or the thought, of a single experient or a single thinker, even although the impersonalism of Dr. Bosanquet's logical "whole" conflicts somewhat with the individuality of his Absolute.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 160.

of many of the characteristic polemical<sup>1</sup> faults of Neo-Hegelianism and its manifestation of a similar spirit of polemical unfairness<sup>2</sup> on the part of their accomplished author; (5) its implication in several really hopeless contradictions in addition to the broad contradiction already referred to; (6) its failure [a common Neo-Hegelian failing] to do justice to the spirit and (in certain important regards) the letter of Kant; (7) its essential non-moralism or its apparently anti-ethical character.

As for the first of these charges, the "abstractionism" of "Individuality and Value," coming as it does on the top of the general perversity of the book, is really a very disastrous thing

<sup>1</sup> The well-known inability of Mr. Bradley, for example, to be content with the reality of any portion or any phase of reality that falls short of what he regards as absolute reality, and with the merely relative meaning that he attaches to any category of the "finite." Also the well-known Neo-Hegelian tendency to make an opponent forge the weapon by which he is to be dislodged from any particular point of view. In the case of Dr. Bosanquet this tendency takes the form of making out any one who holds to a belief in the real existence of finite conscious persons to hold the absurd position of believing in "an impervious and isolated self," a thing, of course, that no one who knows anything about biology, or ethics, or social psychology, really does.

<sup>2</sup> As another instance of Dr. Bosanquet's unintentional unfairness to his opponents, I would note his positive injustice to Theism as such. What many of us think of (however imperfectly) and believe in as God is invariably to him "a theistic Demiurge in his blankness and isolation." I do not believe in such an abstract Demiurge any more than I believe in the separate, isolated self that he conjures up to his mind when he thinks of personality. The problem of the twentieth century may well be what Dr. Ward has signalled as the relation of God to the "Absolute" of the Hegelian metaphysicians, but this suggestion simply means to me the discovery on the part of philosophers of terms and concepts more adequate to the Supreme Being than either the Absolute, or the external deity rejected by Dr. Bosanquet.



for philosophy. While we may pardon an enthusiastic literary Frenchman<sup>1</sup> for saying that, "*The fact is, you see, that a fine book is the end for which the world was made,*" there is hardly any excuse for a philosopher like Dr. Bosanquet coming before the world with the appearance of believing that the richly differentiated universe that we know only in part, exists for the benefit of the science that he represents, for the dialectic of the metaphysician, to enable the "universal" to "become more differentiated" and "more individualized," to become "more representative" of the "*whole.*"<sup>2</sup> We might compare, says Dr. Bosanquet, in a striking and an enthralling<sup>3</sup> passage, "the Absolute to Dante's mind as uttered in the *Divine Comedy* . . . as including in a single, whole poetic experience a world of space and persons, . . . things that, to any ordinary

<sup>1</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, according to Nordau in *Degeneration*, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> And the general reader must remember that the "whole" is always (with all due respect to his high dialectic ability and his high temper of mind and his scholarship) a kind of *ignis fatuus* in Dr. Bosanquet's book, a kind of shadow thrown by the lamps and the tools of his own choosing in his Quixotic search. The "whole" is the "perfected individuality" of the individual who sets out to find truth in this great world of ours with all its *real possibilities* of gain and loss. It is the completion of the "system" of truth to which the truth-seeker would fain reduce the entire universe, that becomes for him (for the time being) the mere "subject-matter" of his thought. It is, that is to say, in both cases, a purely formal conception—an abstraction, although to Dr. Bosanquet it is the reality implied in the very existence and activity of the individual thinker. But the latter is the case to him only because he looks upon man as *existing to think* instead of as *thinking to exist*.

<sup>3</sup> That is to say, for the scholar and the lover of Dante and Dante's world.



mind, fall apart." Now even apart from the highly interesting question of the manifestly great and far-reaching influence of Dante over Dr. Bosanquet, and apart, too, from the notable modesty of Dr. Bosanquet's confession as to the "imperfect" character of the simile just reproduced, no one to-day can think of attaching any ultimate importance to "Dante's mind" without thinking of the extent to which this truly great man<sup>1</sup> was under the influence, not only of his own passions and of the general "problem" of his own life, but of such specialized influences as, for example (1) the mediaeval dualism between the City of God and the Empire of the World, (2) Aristotle's unfortunate separation of the "intellectual" and the "practical" virtues, (3) the evil as well as the good of the dogmatic theology of the fathers of the Church. Goethe is of infinitely more value to us men of the twentieth century than Dante. And one of the very things Goethe is most calculated to teach us is precisely this very matter of the limitations of the cultural ideal of the Middle Ages and of the entire Renaissance period that succeeded it.<sup>2</sup> We should never, therefore, think for a moment of taking Dr. Bosanquet's intellectual abstractionism about the "universal" literally without thinking at the same time of its

<sup>1</sup> For he was not merely a "mind," reflecting "Italy" and "minds" and "experiences."

<sup>2</sup> And that, we might add, is still kept alive by some of our humanists and educators of to-day as the ideal for both primary and secondary education.

limitations, and of its sources in Plato and in Hegel and in Neo-Hegelian rationalism, and of remembering with Hegel himself, "after all, the movement of the notion *is a sort of illusion.*"

Then, secondly, to attempt to think in philosophy or any other science *merely in accordance with the Principle of "Non-Contradiction"* will never<sup>1</sup> take us beyond the few initial positions of fact or of principle (God, "substance," pure being, matter, identity, final cause, freedom, force, the will, the idea a perfect being, or what not) with which we happen for one reason or another to start in our reflections. Nor will this procedure account, of course, for these initial assumptions or facts.

Thirdly, in virtue of its implication in the "solipsism" and the "representationalism" of Subjective Idealism, Dr. Bosanquet's "Absolute" is inferior (both so far as fact and theory are concerned) to the Pluralism and the possible Theism of Pragmatism and Humanism to which we have already made partial references.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is a thing that the beginner is taught in lectures introductory to the study of the philosophy of Kant—in regard to Kant's relation to the barren, dogmatic formalism of Wolff—a one-sided interpreter of the philosophy of Leibniz. I am quite aware that Dr. Bosanquet does not merely use the Principle of Non-Contradiction in the aggressive, or polemical, manner of Mr. Bradley in *Appearance and Reality*. The principle of positive coherence at which he aims, begins, to some extent, where Mr. Bradley stopped. But it is still the idea of consistency or inconsistency, with certain presuppositions of his own, that rules his thinking; it determines, from the very outset of his Lectures, what he accepts and what he rejects.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 152 and p. 156, note 2.

Fourthly, it is only natural that, on account of these, its many polemical mannerisms, "Individuality and Value" has already made upon some of its critics, the impression of being a book that refuses to see things as they are—in the interests of their forced adaptation to the purposes of a preconceived philosophical theory.

Fifthly, there is certainly a sufficient number of contradictions in "Individuality and Value" to prevent it from being regarded as a consistent and a workable (*i.e.* really explanatory) account of our experience as we actually know it. Of these contradictions we think the following may well be enumerated here: (1) That between Dr. Bosanquet's professed principle of accepting as real only that which is "mediated" or established by proof, and the arbitrariness he displays in announcing convictions like the following: "That what really matters is not the preservation of separate minds as such, but the qualities and achievement which, as trustees of the universe, they elicit from the resources assigned them." (2) The contradiction between his belief in the conservation of "values" without the conservation of the existence of the individuals who "elicit" these "values," or who are, as he puts it, the "trustees" for the "universe." (3) That between what he logically wants (his "concrete individual") and what he gives us (an impersonal "system"). (4) The contradiction between the completed personal life in God (or in a perfected society of individuals) that most of

us (judging from the great religions of the world) want as human beings, and the impersonal "conceptual" experience of his book. (5) The contradiction that exists between his intellectualism and his commendable belief in "great convictions" and "really satisfying emotions and experiences." (6) The standing contradiction between his "solipsistic" view of reality (his reduction of the universe to the conceptual experience of a single self-perfecting individual), and the facts of history in support of the idea of the "new," or the "creative" character of the contributions of countless individuals and groups of individuals, to the evolution of the life of the world, or the life of the infinite number of worlds that make up what we think of as the universe. (7) The remarkable contradiction between Dr. Bosanquet's calm rejection in his argumentation of all "naïve ideas" and his own naïve or Greek-like faith in reason, in the substantial existence of the concept or the idea over and above the phenomena and the phenomenal experiences which it is used to interpret.

Lastly, as for the matter of the *non-moralism or the essentially anti-ethical character* of "Individuality and Value," this is a characteristic of the book that should, as such, be partly apparent from what has already been said, in respect of its main argument and its main contentions, and in respect of the apparent contributions of Pragmatism and Humanism to philosophy generally. The abstrac-

tionism of the book, and the absence in it of any real provision for the realities of purpose and of accomplishment (and even of "movement" and "process" in any real sense of these words), are all obviously against the interests of ethics and of conduct, as purposive, human action. So, too, are the findings of the critics that Dr. Bosanquet's "Absolute" is not a reality (for, with Professor Taylor and others, man *must*<sup>1</sup> have an Absolute, or a God, in *whom he can believe as real*) that inspires to action and to motive on the part of ordinary human beings. And it is also fatal to the ethical interests of his book that he does not see with the pragmatists that our human actions and reactions must be regarded as part of what we mean by "reality." And so on.

Apart, however, from these and other hostile pre-suppositions the following would seem to be the chief reasons for pronouncing, as unsatisfactory, the merely incidental treatment that is accorded in "Individuality and Value" to ethics and to the ethical life.

(1) It is not "conduct" or the *normative*<sup>2</sup> voluntary actions of human beings (in a world or society of real human beings) requiring "justice" and "guidance" and "help" that is discussed in these Lectures, but abstractions like

<sup>1</sup> I use this word "must" in a logical as well as in an ethical sense, seeing that all judgment implies a belief in the reality of a world of persons independent of the mere fact of "judgment" as a piece of mental process.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 145.



"desire," or "ordinary desire," or "the selective conations of finite minds," or "the active form of a totality of striving" or [worst of all] the "self as it happens to be," that are discussed there.

(2) Even if conduct, as of course an "organic totality" in its way, be faced for the nonce in "Individuality and Value," it is invariably branded and thought of by Dr. Bosanquet as "naïve morality,"<sup>1</sup> and it is forthwith promptly transformed

<sup>1</sup> On p. 345 the words are: "*When we consider the naïve or elementary life of morality and religion*"; and on p. 346: "*The naïve, or simple self of every-day morality and religion*," and the marginal heading of the page upon which these words occur is "*The naïve good self compared to grasp of a fundamental principle alone*." Could anything more clearly indicate what the Kantians call a confusion of categories [in the case in point the categories of "goodness" and the categories of "truth"] or what Aristotle calls a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*, the unconscious treatment of one order of facts by the terms and conceptions of another order of facts. To Dr. Bosanquet as the Neo-Hellenist that he is in his professed creed, badness is practically stupidity, and "lack of unification of life," and "failure of theoretical grasp." This confusion between goodness and wisdom is again indicated on p. 347 in the words: "*A man is good in so far as his being is 'unified at' all in any sphere of wisdom or activity*." [This is simply not true, and its falsity is a more unforgivable thing in the case of Dr. Bosanquet than it is in the case of the pragmatists who also tend to make the 'moral' a kind of 'unification' or 'effectiveness' in 'purpose'] As a proof of Dr. Bosanquet's transformation of the facts of the ethical life in the interest of logical theory, we can point to p. 334: "*Our actions and ideas issue from our world as a conclusion from its premises, or as a poem from its author's spirit*," or to p. 53, where it is definitely stated that the "*self, as it happens to be*," cannot, in any of its "three aspects," "*serve as a test of reality*." To do the latter, it must, in his opinion, follow the law of the "universal," i.e. become a *logical conception*. Now of course (1) it is not the self "*as it happens to be*" that is chiefly dealt with in ethics, but rather the self as it ought to be. And (2) the ethical self, or the "person," does not follow the "law of the universal" [a logical law] but the law of right and wrong [an ethical law]. As a proof of the subordination of the facts of conduct to the facts of aesthetics, we may take the words on p. 348 where aesthetic excellence is said to be "*goodness in the wider or ('shall we say') in the*



and transmuted, in the most open and unabashed manner in the interests and exigencies of (1) logical theory, (2) aesthetics and aesthetic products [perhaps Dr. Bosanquet's deepest or most emotional interest], and (3) metaphysical theory of a highly abstract character.

(3) The conception of ethics as a "normative science" and of conduct as free and autonomous,<sup>1</sup> and as the voluntary affirmation of a norm or standard or type or ideal, is conspicuous by its absence.

(4) There is really no place either in Dr.

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*narrower sense.*" Now the distinction between ethics and aesthetics is not one of degree, but one of kind.

And as another illustration of his tendency to transform ethical facts in the light of a metaphysical, or a logical, theory [they are the same thing to him] we may quote the emphatic declaration on p. 356: "*Our effort has been to bring the conception of moral and individual initiative nearer to the idea of logical determination,*" or the equally outspoken declaration on p. 353: "*But metaphysical theory, viewing the self in its essential basis of moral solidarity with the natural and social world . . . cannot admit that the independence of the self, though a fact, is more than a partial fact.*" Or the words at the top of this same page: "The primary principle that should govern the whole discussion is this, that the attitude of moral judgment and responsibility for decisions is only one among other attitudes and spheres of experience." These last words alone would prove definitely the non-ethical character of "Individuality and Value." The ethical life is to its author only a "*quatenus consideratur*," only a possible point of view, only an aspect of reality, only an aspect, therefore, of a "logical system." Now if the ethical life of the world is to count for anything at all, it may be said that the ethical life is no mere aspect of the life of the self, and no mere aspect of the life of the world, seeing that "nature" in the sense of mere "physical nature" does not come into the sphere of morality at all. It is rather the activity of the "whole self," or the "normative" reflection of the self as a whole upon all the merely partial or subordinate aspects of its activity, upon bodily life, economic life, intellectual activity, and so on that constitutes the world of morality.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 147, and p. 244.

Bosanquet's "concrete universal" or in his fugitive pages upon ethics for the reality of the distinction between good and evil (as "willed" in actions or as present in dispositions and tendencies). Good and evil<sup>1</sup> are for him, "contents" either for himself as a spectator of man's actions, or for the "concrete universal," or the "whole," or the completed "individual" of his too consummate book.

(5) Like nearly all forms of Absolutism (Hegelianism, Neo-Hegelianism, Spinozism, Hobbism) Dr. Bosanquet's ethics (or the vestigial ethics with which he leaves us) comes perilously near to what is known as Determinism<sup>2</sup> or Fatalism or even Materialism.

<sup>1</sup> Good and evil to Dr. Bosanquet are two quasi-rational systems in active antagonism as claiming to attach different "principles and predicates" to identical data. The essence of their antagonism to Dr. Bosanquet is not, however, that evil is contemplated, as it must be sooner or later, in repentance for example as *wrong*, but rather that the "evil" is an imperfect "logical striving (p. 351) of the self *after unity*" which is in "contradiction with a *fuller and sounder striving*" after the same. The evil self is to him merely the vehicle of a logical contradiction in the self.

<sup>2</sup> This is seen in his admission (on p. 351) that the "bad will" no less than the "good will" is a logical necessity, when taken along with his doctrine about mind and body, his doctrine of the "dependence" (p. 318) of the finite individual upon the external mechanical world. Dr. Bosanquet, of course, thinks that even in this apparent Determinism he is justifiably supplementing the ordinary ideas about the "self" as "creative," and "originative" (p. 354), by the wider recognition that I am more or less completely doing the work of the "universe" as a "member" in a "greater self." And he adds in the same sentence the words that "*I am in a large measure continuous with the greater (p. 355) self,*" and "*dye'd with its colours*"—a further step in Determinism, as it were, and a step which, with the preceding one to which we have just referred, no critic can fail to connect with the Determinism that we have already found to be implicated in his

As for the first of the preceding five points, it is perfectly evident that any discussion of the various psychological phenomena that are doubtless involved in conduct can be regarded as but a preliminary<sup>2</sup> step to the discussion of the real problems of ethics—that of the actions and habits and standards of persons who are the subjects of rights and duties and who affirm certain actions to be right, and certain other actions to be wrong. The point, however, about Dr. Bosanquet's psychological abstractionism, especially when it rises to the height of writing as if the "self" as the "active form of a totality of striving," or the "self as it happens to be," were the same thing as the "personal self" with which we alone are mainly concerned in ethics, is that it is but another instance of the old "spectator"<sup>1</sup> fallacy that we have already found to underlie his whole treatment of the "self" and of "purpose" and of "striving." Such a philosophy, or point of view, is quite foreign to ethics, because it is only in the ethical life that we think of ourselves as "persons," as beings playing a part, as actors or players upon the great stage of life. By not facing the ethical life directly, from within, instead of from without, Dr. Bosanquet has entirely failed to understand it. And if he had

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doctrine of the "self," and in his general doctrine that the "external" must be frankly accepted as a factor in the universe.

<sup>1</sup> By the "spectator" fallacy we mean his tendency to talk and think of the self as it is for a spectator or student, looking at matters from the outside, and not as the self is for the man himself.

attempted this internal consideration of "personality," his whole metaphysic of "individuality" and of the great society of beings who inhabit (or who may be thought of as inhabiting) this universe, would have been very different from what it is.

Then as for the second and third points, it is surely evident from the footnotes that have been appended in connexion with the matter of his transformation of the facts of ethics in the interests of other things like logic, and aesthetics, and metaphysics, that there is indeed, in Bosanquet, no recognition of what must be called the genuine, or independent reality of the moral life, or of the moral ideal as a force in human nature. And as for the fourth point, students of modern ethics are naturally by this time perfectly familiar with the tendency of Rationalism to make evil action and the "evil self" simply the affirmation of a "logically incoherent" point of view. It exists in an English writer like Wollaston<sup>1</sup> as well as in a German philosopher like Hegel. This tendency is indeed a piece of sophistry and illusion because the distinction between good and evil, and the distinction between right and wrong (perhaps the better and the more crucial formulation of the two—for us moderns at least)

<sup>1</sup> Wollaston is the English ethical philosopher who, according to Leslie Stephen's account, thought, after thirty years of meditation, that the only reason he had for not breaking his wife's head with a stick was, that this would be tantamount to a denial that his wife was his wife.

is unintelligible apart from the fact or the idea of the existence of moral agents, who make (in their volition, and in the judgments that accompany or precede their volitions) a "norm," or rule, or line between the ethically permissible and the ethically unpermissible. The rationalism that makes these distinctions merely a matter of "logic," overlooks the fact that in actual life men must be warded off from wrong-doing (and they are in many cases actually so warded off by their consciences and by other things, like the love of home, or the love of honour, or the love of God) by something stronger than the mere idea of a possible theoretical mistake.

As for the fifth point of the Determinism or the Necessitarianism that hangs like a sword of Damocles over the entire ethic of Dr. Bosanquet, the nature of this should be perfectly apparent from many of the statements and considerations that have been brought forward as typical of his entire line of thought. He teaches a "passivism"<sup>1</sup> and an "intellectualism" that are just as pronounced and just as essential to his thought as they are to the great system of his master, Hegel, in whose ambitious philosophy of spirit man's whole destiny is unfolded without the possibility

<sup>1</sup> See *Idola Theatri* by Henry Sturt (the editor of the well-known "Personal Idealism" volume) of Oxford—a book that enumerates and examines many of the fallacies of the Neo-Hegelian school. Mr. Sturt's first chapter is entitled the "Passive Fallacy," which he calls, with some degree of justice, the prime mistake of the idealistic philosophy, meaning by this the "ignoring" of the "kinetic" and the "dynamic" character of our experience.



of his playing himself any appreciable part in the impersonal, dialectic movement in which it is made to consist.

It is now necessary to speak definitely and outspokenly of the element of supreme truth and value in Dr. Bosanquet's unique book, of the positive contribution it makes to philosophy and to natural theology.<sup>1</sup> This is, in a word, its tribute to the permanent element of truth and reality in the idealistic philosophy. And he testifies to this in his "*belief*" *that in the main the work of philosophy has been done*, and "that what is now needed is to recall and concentrate the modern mind from its distraction rather than to invent wholly new theoretic conceptions." This declaration is of itself a position of considerable importance, however widely one is obliged to differ from its author as to what exactly it is that has already been demonstrated and accomplished "in philosophy." If there has really been "nothing done" in philosophy since the time of Socrates, if philosophy is to-day no true antithesis of, and corrective to science, then there is possible neither Pragmatism, nor Humanism, nor any other, possibly more fundamental, philosophy. There can, as Dr. Bosanquet puts it, indeed be *no progress if no definite ground is ever to be recognized as gained.*" This then is the first thing of transcendent importance in "Individuality and Value," its insist-

<sup>1</sup> It is Natural Theology that is the subject proper of the *Gifford Lectures*.



ance upon the fundamentally different estimate of reality given by philosophy in distinction from science and its merely hypothetical treatment of reality. This "difference" is, of course, but natural, seeing that to philosophy there are no things or phenomena without minds, or persons or beings to whom they appear as things and phenomena.

The second great thing of "Individuality and Value" is its insistence upon the need to all philosophy of a recognized grasp of the principle of "Meaning."<sup>1</sup> What this instance implies to Dr. Bosanquet is, that "*at no point in our lives* [either] as [agents or] thinkers are we to accept any supposed element of fact or circumstance as having *any significance*" apart from the great "whole" or the great "reality," with which we believe ourselves to be in contact in our daily experience, when interpreted in the light of our consciousness of ourselves as persons. In the letter of the book his interpretation of the great "whole," or the great reality, of life is by no means as broad and as deep as the one at which we have just hinted in attempting to describe his position. But overriding altogether the mere intellectualism of Dr. Bosanquet's interpretation, is the fact of the *dynamic idealism* for which he virtually stands,<sup>2</sup> in virtue of the great and the simple effort of his lectures<sup>3</sup> to find "value" in "our daily experience

<sup>1</sup> See p. 149 of Chapter VI.

<sup>2</sup> With, we might almost say, the pragmatists and the humanists.

<sup>3</sup> This is really their main distinguishing characteristic and merit.

with its *huge obstinate plurality of independent facts.*" He would start, as we mentioned (at the beginning of this chapter), with what he believes to be "the daily transformation of our experience as verified within what we uncritically take as our private consciousness, so far as its weakness may permit," and "as verified on a larger scale when we think of *such splendid creations as the State and fine art and religion,*" and when we think, too, of "*the mode of our participation in them.*" Now again nothing could indeed be more nobly true (in idea) of the great work of the philosopher than the proper theory and description of this "daily transformation" of our lives, out of the life of "sense" and the life of selfishness, into the spiritual communion<sup>1</sup> that is the essence of all right thinking and all right living.

But we may go further than all this and signalize one or two things in Dr. Bosanquet that we venture to construe as a kind of unconscious testimony, on his part, to the very humanism for which we have been contending throughout.

The things to which we refer are, firstly, his use of the word "belief"<sup>2</sup> in speaking of his opinion that the work of philosophy has in the main been accomplished, and, second, his fine and really praiseworthy<sup>3</sup> confession that his lectures, whatever

<sup>1</sup> See p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> "Indeed, I do not conceal my belief that in the main the work has been done."—*Preface.*

<sup>3</sup> I think that the confession is a praiseworthy one in view of the fact of the prejudice of Rationalism, that philosophy has nothing to do with convictions but only with knowledge.

they may have done or may not have done, at least "contain the record of a very strong conviction."

Dr. Bosanquet's departure, in the letter of his argumentation, from the spirit of these declarations only accentuates what we regard as the regrettable failure and abstractionism of his whole official (or professed) philosophy.

His use of the word belief<sup>1</sup> shows that it is,

<sup>1</sup> By belief I have understood throughout this book simply man's working sense for reality, and I am inclined to think that this is almost the best definition that could be given of it—our working sense for reality. It is at least, despite its apparent evasiveness, most in harmony with the pragmatist-humanist inclusion of will elements and feeling elements in our knowledge and in our apprehension of reality. It is also in harmony with the conception of reality which may, in my opinion, be extracted from both Pragmatism and Idealism—that reality is what it proves itself to be in the daily transformation of our experience. By the retention of the term "working" in this attempted definition I express my agreement with the idea that action, and the willingness to act, is an essential element in belief. The outstanding positions in the definitions of belief that are generally given in philosophical dictionaries are, firstly, that belief is a conviction or subjective apprehension of truth or reality in distinction from demonstrable knowledge or direct evidence; and, secondly, that feeling elements and action elements enter into it. I am inclined to think that the sharp antithesis between belief and knowledge, or the tendency of philosophical books to emphasise the difference between belief and knowledge, is a characteristic, or consequence, of our modern way of looking at things, of our break with the unfortunate, medieval conception of faith and of the higher reason. The study of the facts either of the history of religion or of the history of science, will convince us, I think, that it is always belief, and that it still is belief (as the working sense for reality), that is man's measure of reality, our knowledge about the universe being at all times but a more or less perfect working out of our beliefs and of their implications—of our sense of the different ways in which the world affects us, and of the ways in which we are affected towards it. Nor do I think, as I have indicated in different places, that "reality" can be defined apart from belief, reality being that in which we believe for all purposes, theoretical and practical and emotional. In the conception of reality as a world of intersubjective intercourse in which beings, or persons at different stages of development, share in a common spiritual life, we have attained so far (and only so far) to

after all his professional homage to "mediation" and to the necessary abstractions of logic and system, *belief and not knowledge* that is to him the final and "working" estimate of truth and of reality. And the same conclusion follows from the second matter of the confession of which we have spoken, that his entire argumentation is but the expression of a strong conviction.<sup>1</sup> It is again, therefore, we would insist a *spiritual conviction*, and not a conceptual system that is actually and necessarily the moving force of *his* entire intellectual activity. And, we would add to his own face, it is a conviction moreover that "*works*," and not a "logical whole" or a mere conceptual ideal, that he must (as a philosopher) engender in the mind of his average reader about reality. His "logical whole" and his "individuality as logical completeness," "work" with him [Professor Bosanquet] for the reason that he is primarily an intellectual worker, a worker in the realm of mind. But reality (as the whole world of human work and human effort is there to

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the truth that is common to an idealism of the type of Dr. Bosanquet's, and to pragmatist-humanism when properly developed and interpreted. There are, I find, upon thinking of the matter, any number of philosophers and thinkers who interpret belief, in the larger sense of the term, as our complete and final estimate of reality, and as therefore not exclusive of, but inclusive of knowledge in the ordinary sense of the term.

<sup>1</sup> He even says in the Abstract of his first lecture upon the "Central Experiences," that Lord Gifford's desire that his lecturers should "try to communicate" a "grave experience" is the demand that "introduces us to the double task of philosophy." It [philosophy] needs the best of logic, but also the best of life, and neither can be had in philosophy without the other."

tell us) is more than an intellectual system. And what is a conviction to him is not necessarily a conviction that works with the ordinary man, who knows reality better than he does, or who knows it (like himself) in his desires and in his beliefs rather than in the terms and conceptions that are the mere tools of the intellect and the specialist. For, taking his book as a whole, we may say about it that the dissolution of reality into a conceptual system that is effected there is at best but another convincing proof of the truth of the words of the great David Hume,<sup>1</sup> that the understanding, "*when it acts alone, and according to its most general principles, entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the slightest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or common life.*"

<sup>1</sup> *Treatise upon Human Nature*, sect. vii, (Green and Grose, i. 547).

#### NOTE

It is necessary for me to append a few words as to the possible connexion between the foregoing criticism of the first volume of Dr. Bosanquet's *Gifford Lectures* and the subject-matter of the second volume, which appeared while I was preparing the manuscript of this book for the press. I have been able only to inspect its contents and to inform myself about the ways in which it has impressed some of its representative critics. What I have thus learned does not, in my opinion, make it necessary for me to unsay or to rewrite what I have said in this chapter. My desire was to indicate the kind of criticism that the pragmatists and the humanists, as far as I understand them, would be inclined to make of Absolutism as represented in the *Principle of Individuality and Value* as the last significant Anglo-Hegelian output. This, I



think, I have done, and the reader may be desirably left to himself to settle the question of the relation of the first of Dr. Bosanquet's books to its companion volume that appeared in the following calendar year. I cannot, however, be so wilfully blind to the existence of this second great "Gifford" book of his as to appear to ignore the fact, that on its very face and surface it seems to do many of the things that I have allowed myself to signalize as things that Absolutism and Anglo-Hegelianism have not done, or have done but imperfectly. Its very title, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, and the titles of many of its chapters, and the reception accorded to it in such instructive reviews as those of Professor Sir Henry Jones and Professor Muirhead (in the July numbers of the *Hibbert Journal* and *Mind* respectively), are to my mind convincing proof that it is by far the most serious Anglo-Hegelian attempt of the passing generation to deal with many of the objections that have been brought against Rationalistic Idealism by the pragmatists and the voluntarists, by the defenders of faith and feeling and experience, and (before all these recent people) by many independent idealist writers of our time in England and elsewhere. In the interest of truth and of the thinking public generally, I append the mere titles of some of the chapters and divisions of Dr. Bosanquet's second volume: "The Value of Personal Feeling, and the Grounds of the Distinctness of Persons," "The Moulding of Souls," "The Miracle of Will," the "Hazards and Hardships of Finite Selfhood," the "Stability and Security of Finite Selfhood," "The Religious Consciousness," "The Destiny of the Finite Self," "The Gates of the Future." There is in all the rich content that is thus indicated, and in all the high and deep discussion of "the ideas of a lifetime" that it includes, a veritable mine of philosophical reflection for the reader who desires to think in a connected, or Hegelian, manner about things—a mine, too, that is at least indicative of the wide territory both of fact and of principle upon which pragmatist philosophy must enter before it can become a true philosophy. I cannot find, however—this was surely not to be expected in a thinker of Dr. Bosanquet's power—that the principles of argumentation that determined the nature and contents of the earlier volume have undergone any modification in its success or successor; indeed, what is here offered, and discovered by the reader and the critics, is but a continuation and application of the same dialectic principles to "finite beings, that is, in effect to human souls." If any one will take upon himself the task of estimating the success or the non-success of the enterprise he will travel through a piece of philosophical writing—that is as comprehensive and as coherent, and as elevating in its tone, as anything that has appeared from the Neo-Hegelian camp. The things that I chiefly feel and believe about it are, firstly, that its account of the facts of life and thought are, again, all determined by certain presuppositions about conceivability and about the principles of contradiction and negation; secondly, that it is still the same "whole" of logic that is to it the test of all reality and individuality; and, thirdly, that it is,



again, a great pity that Dr. Bosanquet should not have acted upon some sort of recognition of the relation of his own dialectical principles to those of his master Hegel, or to those of some of his Neo-Hegelian predecessors in England and America. Although it is almost an impertinence on the part of one who has just made the acquaintance of this outstanding volume to speak in any detail of its contents, I can indicate part of my meaning by pointing out that it is throughout such things as "finite mind," the "finite mind" that is "best understood by approaching it from the side of the continuum" [the "whole"], the "finite mind" that is "shaped by the universe," that is "torn between existence and self-transcendence," "appearance," an "externality which is the object of mind," the "positive principle of totality or individuality manifesting itself in a number of forms," "good" and "evil as attitudes concerning a creature's whole being," "volition" in terms of the "principle that there is for every situation a larger and more effective point of view than the given"—that are discussed, and not the real persons who have *what they call* "minds" and "volitions" and "attitudes," and who invent all these principles and distinctions to describe the world of their experience and the world of their thoughts. As against him Pragmatism and Humanism would, I think, both insist that the first reality for all thought and speculation is not the "logical whole" that underlies, in the mind of the thinker, the greater number of all his categories and distinctions, but the life and the lives of the persons in a world of inter-subjective intercourse, wherein these points of view are used for different purposes. And I cannot see how Dr. Bosanquet is entitled to scorn all those who hold to the idea of the reality of the lives of the persons who are agents and thinkers in this personal realm, which is for us the highest reality of the universe, as believers in the "exclusiveness of personality," although I would certainly agree with him that our experience, when properly interpreted, carries us beyond the subjectivism and the individualism of some forms of Pragmatism or Pluralism. The reader who is anxious to know about the real value of the Hegelianism upon which Dr. Bosanquet's philosophy reposes should consult the work of Croce upon the "living" and the "dead" elements in Hegel's System. It has recently been translated into English. Dr. Bosanquet, like many Hegelians, seems to me to overlook almost entirely the important elements in the philosophy of Kant—of some of which I speak of in the next chapter as developed in the spiritualistic philosophy of Bergson.

## CHAPTER IX

### PRAGMATISM AND IDEALISM IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF BERGSON <sup>1</sup>

THE pragmatist elements in the philosophy of Bergson of which it is, perhaps, legitimate for us to speak here are (1) his "Anti-Intellectualism," and (2) his "Activism" or "Actionism." The latter culminates in his freedom-philosophy and his spiritualism. I shall comment shortly upon these two things, and then suggest one or two general criticisms of his philosophy as a whole.

Bergson's anti-intellectualism rests ultimately upon his contention that the human intellect is related in the main to the needs of action, that the brain is an organ of action rather than an organ

<sup>1</sup> I had originally the idea of calling this chapter by the more modest title of a note upon "pragmatist elements" in the teaching of Bergson. I have allowed myself to call it a chapter partly for the sake of symmetry, and partly because the footnotes and the criticism (of his Idealism) have carried it beyond the limits of a note. I find, too, (as I have partly indicated in my preface) in the teaching of Bergson so many things that make up almost the very body of truth and fact upon which Pragmatism, and Humanism, and Idealism all repose (or ought to repose) that I quote them directly in my footnotes. They indicate to me the scope and the territory of my entire subject. And they are a confirmation to me of much that I had myself arrived at before I read a line of Bergson.

of thought, that our intelligence is at home only in the realm of the physical and the mathematical sciences,<sup>1</sup> that contrivance and invention and the practical comprehension of the "material" are its proper activities, and that for these latter purposes it splits up the world of the senses and the understanding into a discontinuous aggregate of physical units, which it then proceeds to reconstruct in a spatial and temporal order. We perceive in Nature, he holds, what interests<sup>2</sup> us in the way of

<sup>1</sup> "Our intelligence, as it leaves the hands of nature, has for its chief object the unorganised solid" (*Creative Evolution*, p. 162); "of immobility alone does the intellect form a clear idea" (*ibid.* 164). "The aspect of life that is accessible to the intellect—as indeed to our senses, of which our intellect is the extension—is that which offers a hold to action" (*ibid.* 170). "We see that the intellect, so skilful in dealing with the inert, is awkward the moment it touches the living. Whether it wants to treat the life of the body or the life of the mind, it proceeds with the rigour, the stiffness, and the brutality of the instrument *not designed* for such use. The history of hygiene or of pedagogy teaches us much in this matter. When we think of the cardinal, urgent, and constant need we have to preserve our bodies and to raise our souls, of the special facilities given to each of us in this field to experiment continually on ourselves and on others, of the palpable injury by which the wrongness of a medical or a pedagogical practice is made manifest and punished at once, we are amazed at the stupidity and especially at the persistence of errors. We may easily find their origin in the natural obstinacy *with which we treat the living like the lifeless*, and think all reality, however fluid, under the form of the sharply-defined solid. *We are at ease only in the discontinuous, in the immobile, in the dead. The intellect is characterised by a natural inability to comprehend life*" (*Creative Evolution*, p. 174). (Italics mine.)

<sup>2</sup> "I look and I think I see, I listen and I think I hear, I examine myself and I think I am reading the very depths of my heart. But what I see and hear of the outer world is purely and simply a *selection made by my senses to serve as a light to my conduct*; what I know of myself is what comes to the surface, what participates in my actions. My senses and my consciousness, therefore, give me no more than a *practical simplification* of reality in the vision they furnish me of myself

our vital needs; our intellect is adapted, not for the understanding or the purely rational ("abstract") comprehension of "causality" and the "life of things," but for the maintenance and furtherance of our own lives, and for the creation of the instruments and agencies (signs, language, tools, imagined sequences and laws, essences, causes, the "descriptions" of science, the special senses, the convolutions of the brain, etc.) that minister to this. Science is to-day still penetrated through and through with primitive metaphysics, with the metaphysics of animism, with a belief in separate things like forces, atoms, elements, or what not—indicative all of them of its attempt to "divide up" the real that it may command it for theoretical and practical purposes. We can see this in the "structural psychology"<sup>1</sup> of the day and its analysis of our mental life into "elements," in

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and of things, the differences that are useless to man are obliterated, the resemblances that are useful to him are emphasised; ways are traced out for me in advance along which my activity is to travel. These ways are the ways which all mankind has trod before me. Things have been classified with a view to the use I can derive from them" (*Laughter*, p. 151). "Life implies the acceptance of the *utilitarian* side of things in order to respond to them by appropriate reactions; all other impressions must be dimmed or else reach us vague and blurred" (*ibid.* p. 131). These last words give us a glimpse of a very important part of Bergson's teaching—his idea, namely (Voltaire has it in his *Micromégas*), that "matter" is greater than our perceptions, that our perceptions reveal to us only those aspects of the physical universe with which we are practically concerned.

<sup>1</sup> Some years ago psychologists began to distinguish a "structural" from a "functional" psychology, meaning by the former what is otherwise called Psycho-Physics or (to some extent) Experimental Psychology.

respect of the number and character of which there are lasting differences of opinion among the masters of the science—into “impressions,” and “affections,” and sensations, images, memories, ideas, and so on. And we can see it, too, in the erroneous attempts sometimes made by psychologists to treat these entities as if they had clearly defined temporal and spatial characteristics or qualities.

The supreme mistake of philosophy, according to Bergson, has been to import into the domain of speculation a method of thinking that was originally destined for action. It has forgotten that nearly all the leading conceptions of common sense and of science and of “analysis” have been invented, not for final and general, but for relative and particular purposes. And it has fallen too readily under the influence of a certain traditional view of the relations between metaphysics and science—the view, namely, that philosophy should just take the findings of science and of common-sense about the world as its initial material, subjecting them, of course, to a certain preliminary reinterpretation, but finally reconstructing them, almost as they were, into a system.<sup>1</sup> The one thing, in short, that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. “At first sight it may seem prudent to leave the consideration of facts to positive science, to let physics and chemistry busy themselves with matter, the biological and psychological sciences *with life*. The task of the philosopher is then clearly defined. *He takes facts and laws from the scientist's hand*, and whether he tries to go beyond them in order to reach their deeper causes, or whether he thinks it impossible to go further, and even proves it by the analysis of scientific knowledge,



philosophy has failed to understand is the life and the movement and the process of the world, as an infinitely more important fact than the endless terms and conceptions and entities ("will," "reason," "Ideas," etc.) into which it has been analysed. We might sum up the whole by saying that Bergson's anti-intellectualism is simply a protest, not against the use, but only against the "systematic misuse"<sup>1</sup> of general conceptions that have been current in science and philosophy "since the time of Socrates," a protest, however, that in his case is not merely general and negative, but particularised and positive.<sup>2</sup>

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in both cases he has for *the facts and relations, handed over by science, the sort of respect that is due to a final verdict*. To this knowledge he adds a critique of the faculty of knowing, and also, if he thinks proper, a metaphysic; but the *matter* of knowledge he regards as the affair of science, and not of philosophy" (*Creative Evolution*, pp. 204-5). [All this represents only too faithfully what even some of our Neo-Kantians have been saying, and teaching, although there is an error in their whole procedure here.]

<sup>1</sup> Schopenhauer's phrase. See my book upon *Schopenhauer's System*.

<sup>2</sup> It is chiefly in *Matter and Memory* (in which, by the way, there are pages and pages of criticism of the rationalism of philosophy that are as valuable as anything we have in philosophy since the time of Descartes—Kant not excepted) that we are to look for the detailed philosophy of sensation and of perception, and the detailed philosophy of science upon which this protest of Bergson's against the excesses of "conceptualism" rests. I indicate, too, at different places in this chapter some of the other special considerations upon which it rests. The gist of the whole is to be found, perhaps, in his contention that our science and our philosophy of the past centuries have both regarded "perception" as teaching us (somehow) what things are independently of their effect upon us, and of their place in the moving equilibrium of things—the truth being on the contrary (with Pragmatism and Humanism) that our knowledge has throughout a necessary relation to ourselves and to our place in the universe, and to our liberation from matter in the life of the spirit.



Like any and all anti-intellectualism, Bergson's anti-intellectualism is liable to serious misinterpretation, and it is currently misinterpreted and misrepresented as "irrationalism." His intention, however, is not to destroy and to condemn philosophy and reasoning, and to exalt mere intuition and faith, but rather to "liberate" <sup>1</sup> our human consciousness of ourselves and of the world from the dogmatism of what he regards to be the utilitarian intellect, from the many hopeless contradictions and antinomies and puzzles of the mere analytic understanding. Philosophy, in particular, he would free from the last traces and symptoms of scientific rationalism, although fully aware of the fact that our modern philosophy had its very departure from the rationalism of the great founders of modern science like Kepler and Galileo and the rest.

He would strike at the roots of all this confident

<sup>1</sup> He expresses this idea in the following way in the Introduction to *Matter and Memory*: "Psychology has for its object the study of the human mind for practical utility," whereas in "metaphysics" we see "this same mind striving (the idea, as we say elsewhere, is not free from difficulty) to transcend the conditions of useful action and to come back to itself as to a pure creative energy." Or in the following sentences from his *Creative Evolution*: "We must remember that philosophy, as we define it, has not yet become completely conscious of itself. Physics understands its role when it pushes matter into the direction of spatiality; but has metaphysics understood its role when it has simply trodden the steps of physics, in the chimerical hope of going farther in the same direction? Should not its own task be, on the contrary, to remount the incline that physics descends, to bring matters back to its origins, and to build up progressively a cosmology which would be, so to speak, a reversed psychology. All that which seems positive to the physicist and to the geometrician would become, from this new point of view, an interruption or inversion of the true positivity which would have to be defined in psychological terms" (pp. 219-20, italics mine).

rationalism or scientific philosophy by opening up a broader and a deeper view of truth than that afforded to the merely piece-meal and utilitarian view.

As for the Actionism and the action philosophy of Bergson, this is perhaps more in line than any other tendency of the day with the new life and the new thought of the twentieth century, although (like Pragmatism) it stands in need of correction or revision by the principles of a sound ethical philosophy, by the Idealism that is not, and cannot be, the mere creation of to-day or yesterday. In essence it is, to begin with, but an extension to the mind as a whole and to all its so-called special faculties ("sensation," "perception," "memory," "ideation," "judgment," "thinking," "emotion," and the rest) of the "dynamic,"<sup>1</sup> instead of the

<sup>1</sup> As an indication of what the acceptance of the dynamic instead of the static view of matter on the part of Bergson means, I cite the phrase (or the conception) on p. 82 of *Matter and Memory*, the effect that "*matter is here as elsewhere the vehicle of an action*," or the even more emphatic declaration on p. 261 of *Creative Evolution*, "*There are no things, there are only actions*." It is impossible, of course, that these mere extracts can convey to the mind of the casual reader the same significance that they obtain in their setting in the pages of Bergson, although it is surely almost a matter of common knowledge about his teaching, that one of the first things it does is to begin with the same activist or "actionistic" view of nature and matter that seems to be the stock in trade of the physics of our time since the discoveries pertaining to radio-activity, etc. Being only a layman in such matters, I may be excused for quoting from a recent booklet (whose very presence in the series in which it appears is to people like myself a guarantee of its scientific reliability) in which I find this same activist view of matter that I find in Bergson. "What are the processes by which the primary rock material is shifted? There is the wind that, etc. etc. . . . There are the streams and rivers that, etc. . . . There is the sea constantly wearing away, etc. . . . Then there are 'subtle' physical

older, static point of view that the recent science of our time has applied to matter and to life, and that Pragmatism and the "hypothetical method" have sought to apply to all the ordinary conceptions and constructions that exist in the different domains of the different sciences.<sup>1</sup> It is also, from our point of view, as we may see, an attempt at the expression, in the terms of a comparatively simple philosophy, of many of the considerations in respect of knowledge and conduct that have been brought forward in the preceding pages of this book. We have already dwelt in different ways, for example, upon the fact that there is no perception or sensation without an organic reaction on the part of the percipient or the sentient being, that an idea is in a sense a motor

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and 'chemical' forces. And the action of plants. . . . Hence by various mechanical, organic, and chemical processes the materials originally scattered through the rocks of the earth's crust, and floating in the air or water, are collected into layers and form beds of sand, clay, limestone, salt, and the various mineral fuels, including peat and coal" (*The Making of the Earth*, by Professor Gregory, F.R.S., of Glasgow University: Williams and Norgate).

It is only right to state here, or to remind the reader in this matter of a "dynamic" view of matter, that Bergson not only dissipates matter into force or energy or activity (as do the physicists of to-day), but also actually credits the world of matter and life with a kind of consciousness (and why not be courageous about it?) in which what I have already called the "susceptibility of everything to everything else," or the *action* of everything upon everything else, becomes credible and intelligible. "No doubt, also, *the material universe itself, defined as the totality of images, is a kind of consciousness in which everything compensates and neutralises everything else, a consciousness of which all the potential parts, balancing each other by a reaction which is always equal to the action, reciprocally hinder each from standing out*" (*Matter and Memory*, p. 313).

• <sup>1</sup> See Chapter III., and also the references to Mach, Ostwald, Poincaré, and others, in the second chapter and elsewhere.

attitude (a way of comprehending particulars or particular facts in relation to our purposes and our ends), that a logical judgment represents a "division" of the real, or of the processes of Nature, for some purpose or other, that our whole mental life is purposive, that there is no "pure" cognition without attendant emotion and<sup>1</sup> volition, that it is in action that desire and thought come together, that our whole knowledge of the world is necessarily a knowledge of it in terms of our purposes and our highest attitudes, and so on. All of this is, as it were, an indication of the psychological and the logical considerations upon which Bergson bases his positive,<sup>2</sup> activistic, philosophy of mind.

<sup>1</sup> "There is no intelligence in which some traces of instinct are not to be discovered, more, no instinct that is not surrounded with a fringe of intelligence" (*Creative Evolution*, p. 143).

<sup>2</sup> "We will not dwell here upon a point we have dealt with in former works. Let us merely recall that a theory [the theory of contemporary physiological psychology] such as that according to which consciousness is attached to certain neurons, and is thrown off from their work like a phosphorescence, may be accepted by the scientist for the detail of analysis; it is a convenient mode of expression. But it is nothing else. In reality, a living being is a centre of action. It represents a certain sum of contingency entering into the world, that is to say, a certain quantity of possible action—a quantity variable with individuals and especially with species. The nervous system of an animal marks out the flexible lines on which its action will run (although the potential energy is accumulated in the muscles rather than in the nervous system itself); its nervous centres indicate, by their development and their configuration, the more or less extended choice it will have among more or less numerous and complicated actions. Now, since the awakening of consciousness in a living creature is the more complete, the greater the latitude of choice allowed to it and the larger the amount of action bestowed upon it, it is clear that the development of consciousness will appear to be dependent on that of the nervous centres. On the other hand, every state of consciousness being, in one aspect of it,

It is to be remembered in Bergson's interest that when we speak of his Actionism<sup>1</sup> we do not mean a narrowing down<sup>2</sup> on his part of the activities of the soul to physical labour and to mere utilitarian effort, but its capacity, also, for that creative activity which he takes to be the very keynote of personal life and the evolutionary process.

As for the freedom-philosophy with which Bergson's Actionism is to be associated, this is worked out by him, firstly, in the most perfect correspondence with what he believes to be the facts of life and mind; and, secondly, in terms of that anti-rationalism (or hostility to the merely

a question put to the motor activity and even the beginning of a reply, there is no psychical event that does not imply the entry into play of the cortical mechanisms. Everything seems, therefore, to happen *as if* consciousness sprang from the brain, and *as if* the detail of conscious activity were modelled on that of the cerebral activity. In reality consciousness does not spring from the brain, but brain and consciousness correspond because equally they measure . . . the quantity of choice that the living being has at its disposal" (*Creative Evolution*, pp. 266-7).

<sup>1</sup> "Instead of starting from *affection* [or 'sensation' in the old sense of the haphazard sensation] of which we can say nothing, since there is no reason why it should be what it is rather than anything else, we start from *action*, that is to say, from our power of effecting changes in things, a faculty attested by consciousness, and towards which all the powers of the organised body are seen to converge. So we place ourselves at once in the midst of extended images [to Bergson as an idealist things are at the same time images or ideas for a consciousness in other things, or in us, or in beings other than ourselves], and in this material universe we perceive centres of indetermination characteristic of life" (*Matter and Memory*, p. 67).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the words in the Preface to *Matter and Memory*: "The whole personality, which, normally narrowed down by action, expands with the unscrewing of the vice in which it has allowed itself to be squeezed," or the words in the same place about the task of metaphysics being the attempt of the "mind striving to transcend the conditions of useful action."



scientific intellect) which is his working theory of knowledge. His views upon this subject have also been depreciated and misunderstood by some of his opponents who attack what they call his "intuitional" treatment of the freedom-question—his insistence upon the direct intuition of our life that we have when we act consciously, and when we are "most ourselves"—when we act out "freely" our own nature. To him the primary fact for any human being is the life-impulse that is both instinctive and reflective, that is certainly far more of a fundamental reality than any of those entities or concepts ("cells," "atoms," "forces," "laws," or what not) which, with Kant, he clearly sees to be the creation of the intellect for its descriptive and practical purposes. This life is "free" in the sense that we are not "determined" by any or all of those forces and laws to which our intellect subjects everything else, but which it cannot apply to the life that is more than mere matter, that is a real becoming and a real process, a real creation and development.

The "spiritualism," again, of his interpretation of this life and activity rests, to begin with, upon his opinion that the very inception of the activity, and the adjustment, and the selection in which the simplest life-effort, and the simplest perception of a living being consist, indicate the presence and the operation of a controlling agency,<sup>1</sup> or mind, or principle of

<sup>1</sup> We refer elsewhere in this chapter to Bergson's idea that living

spiritual "choice" that is not, and cannot be, explained on the principles of a mechanical science or philosophy. This principle is, in a word, the life-force, or the creative activity, the *élan vital*

beings are "centres of indetermination," that is to say, creatures who hold their place in nature and that of their species by "persisting in their own being" (the language of Spinoza) by acting and reacting upon some of the many forces of nature that act upon them, and by avoiding the action of other forces and other animals. "They allow to pass through them," he says, "so to speak, those external influences which are indifferent to them; the others isolated become 'perceptions' by their very isolation" (*Matter and Memory*, pp. 28, 29). We also refer to Bergson's idea that the life-force has expressed itself along different grades of being (mineral, animal, and so on). Both these ideas are a partial explanation of what we mean by the presence of a spiritual activity in both inanimate and animate nature. So also is Bergson's idea that the purely mechanical explanation either of nature or of life is but a device of the intellect for the purposes of description. More specifically it is expressed, too, in his idea that "Our representation of matter is the measure of our possible action upon bodies; it results from the discarding of what has no interest for our needs, or more generally for our functions" (*Matter and Memory*, p. 30), or that "Consciousness" is just this choice of "attaining to" or attending to "certain parts and certain aspects of those parts" of the "material universe" (*ibid.* p. 31), or that "sense-perception" is an "elementary question to my motor activity." "The truth is that my nervous system, interposed between the objects which affect my body and those which I can influence, is a mere conductor, transmitting, sending back, or inhibiting movement. This conductor is composed of an enormous number of threads which stretch from the periphery to the centre, and from the centre to the periphery. As many threads pass from the periphery to the centre, so many points of space are there able to make an appeal to my will, and to put, so to speak, an elementary question to my motor activity. Every such question is what is termed a perception" (*ibid.* 40, 41; italics mine). Or, as he puts it, on p. 313, "No doubt the choice of perception from among images in general is the effect of a discernment which foreshadows spirit. . . . But to touch the reality of spirit we must place ourselves at the point where an individual consciousness, continuing and retaining the past in a present enriched by it, thus escapes the law of necessity, the law which ordains that the past shall ever follow itself in a present which merely repeats it in another form, and that all things shall ever be flowing away. When we pass from pure perception to memory, we definitely abandon matter for spirit."

of which we read so much in his books, that has "seized upon matter," vitalizing it into force and energy, into the "play" upon each other of all the varied activities and grades and forms of the will to live, and into the various forms of socialized and co-operative living on the part of animals and men. We shall immediately remark upon the matter of the apparent limitations of this spiritual philosophy of life, or reality, that is here but indicated or stated.

One of its essential features, so far as we are at present concerned, is his claim that his introduction of a spiritual principle into the life-force, or the creative activity that has expressed itself in the various grades and forms of life, both animal and human, is not a phase of the old philosophy<sup>1</sup> or theology of "final causes" or of a pre-determined<sup>2</sup> "teleology." To this old finalism or

<sup>1</sup> Bergson is always able to detect the relapses even of "mechanism" and of the mechanical philosophy of science into "finalism," as when he says on p. 72 of his *Creative Evolution*, "To sum up, if the accidental variations that bring about evolution are insensible variations, some good genius must be appealed to—the genius of the future species—in order to preserve and accumulate these variations, for "selection" will not look after this. If, on the other hand, the accidental variations are sudden, then, for the previous function to go on, or for a new function to take its place, all the changes that have happened together must be complementary. So we have to fall back on the good genius again to obtain the convergence of simultaneous changes, as before to be assured of the continuity of direction of successive variations."

<sup>2</sup> We must remember that to Bergson evolution has taken place along different lines—those of Automatism (in plant-life), Instinct (in animal life), and Intelligence (in human life and the higher animals), and that along none of those lines are we to fall into the errors either of materialism, or of "Darwinism" (the belief in "accidental variations"), or of the "design-philosophy," or even of theories like neo-Lamarckian-

teleology<sup>1</sup> the life of organic nature (the "organs" and "cells," the "instinctive" actions, and the "adjustments" of animals, and so on) were all due to the work of a pre-existing, calculating intelligence operating upon matter; whereas to him they are but different expressions or creations of the life-force that is as little predetermined in organic evolution, as it is in the realm of the activities interpreted for us (in part) by the newer physics and the newer chemistry—in the processes, for example, that are exemplified in the generation of a star out of a nebula. This entire treatment, however, of the notion of purpose in nature is a matter of great difficulty in the philosophy of Bergson, and his own thought (as I shall presently state) is apt to strike us as just as hypothetical as some of the views he attempts to combat. It raises, too, the question of the valuation of his philosophy as a whole, and of its relation to the great thinker who still stands in the very centre of the entire modern movement from Copernicus to Comte and Darwin—Immanuel Kant.<sup>2</sup>

We shall best get at the matter of the fuller developments of the philosophy of Bergson that are of interest to us at present, by indicating some

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ism" or neo-vitalism. To him all these philosophies are but imperfect and hypothetical attempts to grasp "movement" and "life" which both "*transcend finality, if we understand by finality the realisation of an idea conceived or conceivable in advance*" (*Creative Evolution*, p. 236).

<sup>1</sup> "Paleyism" or "Miltonism" are still good names for the thing.

<sup>2</sup> I have read in some competent book upon Evolution.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 261.

of the results that would accrue from it to the constructive philosophy in which we are interested as the outcome of Pragmatism and Idealism. Among these would be, firstly, a new and a fresh, and yet a perfectly rational apprehension of the fact of the necessarily abstract and hypothetical<sup>1</sup> character of the analyses to which our world is subjected by the science and by the technic and the supposed "economy" of our present culture.<sup>2</sup> Then an equally new and equally

<sup>1</sup> To Bergson concepts are just as hypothetical in the realm of science, as they are to thinkers like Mach and Poincaré, and Professor Ward of Cambridge. See the following, for example, from *Matter and Memory* (p. 263): "We shall never explain by means of particles, whatever these may be, the simple properties of matter; at most we can thus follow out into corpuscles as artificial as the *corpus*, the body itself—the actions and reactions of this body with regard to all the others. This is precisely the object of chemistry. It studies bodies rather than *matter*; and so we understand why it stops at the atom, which is still endowed with the general properties of matter. But the materiality of the atom dissolves more and more under the eyes of the physicist. We have no reason, for instance, for representing the atom to ourselves as a solid, rather than as a liquid or gaseous, nor for picturing the reciprocal action of atoms by shocks rather than in any other way." Or, the following characteristic passage from the same book (p. 280) in respect of the hypothetical character of the concepts of "pure time" and "pure space": "Homogeneous *space* and homogeneous *time* are then neither properties of things nor essential conditions of our faculty of knowing them; they express, in an abstract form, the double work of solidification and of division, which we effect on the moving continuity of the real in order to obtain there a fulcrum for our action, in order to fix within it starting-points for our operation, in short, to introduce into it real changes. They are the *diagrammatic designs* of our eventual action upon matter."

<sup>2</sup> Like his celebrated contemporary Eucken, and like many other thinkers of their time, Bergson is profoundly convinced of the one-sidedness of the so-called scientific culture of our day, and of the error of any and all conceptions of education and of social policy that are based upon it. Although I refer below to the limitations of his view that the intellect is adapted only to matter and to mechanical construc-



rational (or "rationally grounded") conviction of the inadequacy of the physical and the scientific categories to the comprehension and the explanation of life and of the life of the spirit. Thirdly, a confirmation of many of the tendencies to which the Pragmatism and the Voluntarism and the Humanism of the last century have given a more or less one-sided and imperfect formulation. Among such confirmed tendencies are (a) the attempt they have all made to attain to a deeper<sup>1</sup> view of human nature than the view hitherto taken by rationalism and intellectualism, (β) their emphasis upon the freedom and the initiative<sup>2</sup>

tion, I append the following quotation as symptomatic of his value as a spiritual teacher in our scientific age: "As regards human intelligence (*Creative Evolution*, pp. 145-6) it has not been sufficiently noted that mechanical invention has been from the first its essential feature, *that even to-day our social life gravitates around the manufacture and use of artificial instruments*. . . . This we hardly realise, *because it takes longer to change ourselves than to change our tools*. . . . In thousands of years, when seen from the distance, *only the broad lines of our present age will be visible*, our wars and our revolutions will count for little, even supposing they are remembered at all, but the steam-engine, and the procession of inventions of every kind that accompanied it, will perhaps be spoken of as we speak of the bronze or of the chipped stone of pre-historic times; it will serve to define an age."

<sup>1</sup> I find this in Bergson's whole attribution of much of our "perceptual" and "scientific" knowledge of things to the "needs of action," and in the detailed reasons that we attempt on pp. 236-238 to indicate for his polemic against rationalism.

<sup>2</sup> This confirmation I find in Bergson's whole philosophy of perception and sensation referred to on p. 236, and in his idea of a living being as a "centre of action" or "a centre of indetermination." In fact it is obvious that he is one of the very greatest of the upholders of the "freedom" of the life of the individual, and of the fact that each new individual contributes something new of its own to the sum-total of existence, to the life of its species, and to the life of the world. Of course there is no more an explanation in his teaching of the causes of "variation" or the differences at birth between the off-spring of men and of animals, than there is in the philosophy of Darwin.

of the individual and upon the necessity, on the part of philosophy, of a "dynamic" or "motive-awakening"<sup>1</sup> theory of reality, ( $\gamma$ ) their insistence<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The idea of this necessity is confirmed in Bergson's whole philosophy of man's life as a life of action, as a constant surmounting of obstacles, as a life that reacts in its own way upon the life of nature, upon the life of the human species as such, upon the infinite life and energy and "love" of God—if we may soar to this great thought. See, for example, what he writes in explanation of the "discordance" of which he speaks thus: "Our freedom, in the very movements by which it is affirmed, creates the growing habits that will stifle it if it fails to renew itself by a constant effort: it is dogged by automatism. The letter kills the spirit. And our most ardent enthusiasm, as soon as it is externalised into action, is so naturally congealed into the cold calculation of interest or vanity, the one takes so easily the shape of the other, that we might confuse them together, doubt our sincerity, deny goodness and love." The explanatory words are the following. [They are quite typical of the kind of philosophy of life that Bergson thinks of as alone worthy of the name of a philosophy of the living. And the reference to "love," as the highest "dynamic" force in this world of ours, occurs at their close.] "The profound cause of this discordance lies in an irremediable difference of rhythm. Life is general, is mobility itself; particular manifestations of life accept this mobility reluctantly, and constantly lag behind. It is always going ahead; they want to mark time. Evolution in general would fain go on in a straight line; each special evolution is a kind of circle. Like eddies of dust raised by the wind as it passes, the living turn on themselves, borne up by the great blast of life. They are therefore relatively stable, and counterfeit immobility so well that we treat each of them as a *thing* rather than as a *progress*, forgetting that the very permanence of their form is only the outline of a movement. At times, however, in a fleeting vision, the invisible breath that bears them is materialised before our eyes. We have this *sudden illumination before certain forms of maternal love*, so striking and in most animals so touching, observable even in the solicitude of the plant for its seed. This *love, in which some have seen the great mystery of life, may possibly deliver us life's secret*. It shows us each generation leaning over the generation that shall follow. It allows us a glimpse of the fact that the living being is above all a thoroughfare, and that the essence of life is in the movement by which life is transmitted" (*Creative Evolution*, pp. 134-5; italics mine). It is surely needless to point out how much truer to human nature, truer therefore to an important part of reality, this life-philosophy is than the abstractionism of Professor Bosanquet in the preceding chapter.

<sup>2</sup> This insistence is, I think, amply confirmed by the very fact of

similarly upon the necessity to our thought of a *direct contact* with reality, and upon the impossibility of our beginning in philosophy without assumptions of one kind or another, ( $\delta$ ) their refusal to make any ultimate separation<sup>1</sup> between the intellect and the will, between the highest thought and the highest emotion, ( $\epsilon$ ) their tendency to regard belief<sup>2</sup> rather than know-

the *immediate* contact with life and reality indicated in the quotation that is given in the preceding note upon the "motive-awakening," or the "dynamic" character of the philosophy of Bergson. It is also confirmed in his manifest insistence upon the one fact that all philosophy must assume (and has for ever assumed) the fact of life, the fact of the life and thought of God that underlies all our life and all our thought.

<sup>1</sup> This position of the pragmatists is certainly confirmed by Bergson's entire doctrine of the brain and of the intellect—that their main service is, in the first instance, to interpret the "life" of things, its relation to our own will and to our practical activity. I have suggested, too, in this chapter that it is obviously a characteristic, or a consequence, of the philosophy of Bergson that our highest thought about ourselves and about the world should be relative to, and provocative, of our highest emotion.

<sup>2</sup> It is only with some degree of care and reservation that I wish to refer to any apparent confirmation of this idea by Bergson. And, as always, I object to the idea of any ultimate separation or "dualism" between faith and knowledge—faith being implied in all "knowledge." There is no opposition in Bergson, or in the principles of his philosophy, between faith and knowledge; it is rather his idea that "the faculty of *seeing* should be made one with the act of *willing*" (*Creative Evolution*, 250; his italics), and that "philosophy" should "proceed, with the powers of conceptual thought alone, to the ideal reconstruction of all things, even of life" (*C.E.* xi; italics mine). My reasons for finding in his writings a confirmation of the idea that it is indeed our rational and spiritual faith, rather than our demonstrable knowledge, that is to us the measure of truth and reality, are such considerations as the following (in addition to those of the clauses just quoted), his close association between the intellectual and the "volitional," his general faith in "creative evolution," in the idea that our "consciousness" means for us "new choices" and (real) "new possibilities," his faith in the higher intuitions of the mind, in the spiritual nature of man, his belief that the building up of the true philosophy of the future will involve "the collective and progressive effort of many thinkers, of

ledge as our fundamental estimate of truth and reality.

A fourth constructive result, however, of the philosophy of Bergson would be not the mere confirmation of any number of pragmatist and humanist tendencies, but their integration, and their transformation into the evidences and the manifestation of a new spiritual philosophy of life and of the universe generally. It is this possible *quasi* integration and transformation of so many of the tendencies of Pragmatism and Voluntarism and of the Philosophy of Science of the day, that makes Bergson the greatest of all the pragmatists—although the term hardly occurs in his main writings, and although he breathes from first to last the air of an idealism<sup>1</sup> and a spiritualism that is above and beyond all the mere instrumentalism, and the mere empiricism and the ethical opportunism of Pragmatism.

The following are some of the difficulties and counter-considerations that stand in the way of the intelligibility and the supposed novelty of the philosophy of Bergson. (1) It is in some respects but a biological philosophy after all, a would-be philosophical interpretation of the "evolutionary process" which takes many things for granted and

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many observers also, completing, correcting, and improving one another" (C.E. xiv.), etc. etc.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 257, note 1.

ignores many difficulties. Some of these things are the life-force itself, the *élan de vie*, the vital aspects that he sees in the forces of nature, the "eternal movement" of which he is always speaking as the only reality and as the very life of the universe, the whole "adaptation" philosophy that characterises his own teleology despite his attacks on "mechanism" and on "finalism," and so on. One is tempted, indeed, to think that in much of all this he forgets his own doctrine of the hypothetical character of science and philosophy, and that, in his very anxiety to escape from mechanism and from rationalism, and Paleyism, he credits Nature with a contingency and a "freedom" <sup>1</sup> that corresponds in their way to the chaos, of which the Greeks thought as a necessary background to the cosmos. He seems, in other words, to deify into a kind of eternal "becoming" and a *quasi* free and creative "duration," his own (necessary) inability to grasp the system of things.

Then, secondly, there is a veritable crop of difficulties that arise out of his contention that our intellect is adapted "only to matter." What, for example, of the various non-utilitarian <sup>2</sup> intuitions of art and morality and religion, that are as un-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 14 in reference to Dr. Schiller's suggestion that "freedom" may "pervade the universe."

<sup>2</sup> "From time to time, however, in a fit of absent-mindedness, nature raises up souls that are more detached from life. . . . Were this detachment complete, did the soul no longer cleave to action by any of its perceptions, it would be the soul of an artist such as the world has never yet seen" (*Laughter*, p. 154).



doubtedly facts of our conscious experience as is our comprehension and utilisation of "matter" for the various purposes of civilisation? <sup>1</sup> If it be literally true that our understanding is "incapacitated" for the comprehension<sup>c</sup> of life and of the creative activities of the soul, a new set of categories and a higher form of intelligence (than the merely material) must be elaborated for this special purpose. And if this higher form of intelligence be the "intuition" of which Bergson undoubtedly makes so much, then he must be more careful than he often is in suggesting that intuition and a philosophy of our intuitions "must go counter to the intellect." <sup>2</sup> His theory of art reduces itself, for example, in the main to the negative contention that spiritual perception is always simply "anti-mechanical," <sup>3</sup> simply the power of seeing things in another way than that of the engineer or the craftsman, the *homo faber*.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "We must break with scientific habits which are adapted to the fundamental requirements of thought, *we must do violence to the mind, go counter to the natural bent of the intellect*. But that is just the function of philosophy" (*Creative Evolution*, p. 31).

<sup>3</sup> "So art, whether it be painting or sculpture, poetry or music, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself" (*Laughter*, p. 157). It is true that if we read further on this page, and elsewhere in Bergson, we will be able to see that there is for him in art and in the spiritual life a kind of intelligence and knowledge. But it is difficult to work out an expression or a characterisation of this intelligence and this knowledge. "Art," he says, "is only a more direct vision of reality." And again: "Realism is in the work when idealism is in the soul, and it is only through ideality that we can resume contact with reality" (*ibid.*).

Thirdly, there are many dualisms or oppositions in his doctrine or expressed teaching, reducible all of them to the one great Cartesian dualism between the mind and the matter that are said by him to "intersect in memory, and in perception, and in the life of the spirit generally—the opposition, for example, between instinct and intelligence, that between intelligence and intuition,<sup>1</sup> between the "mechanical" and the "organic," between the "upward" and the "downward" movements that he attributes to the life-force. And there is a striking inconsistency between his apparent acceptance of the teaching of Kant in respect of the limitations of the physical and the temporal way of looking at things (ourselves included and our actions) and his belief in an eternal "duration,"<sup>2</sup> or movement, or process of

<sup>1</sup> It is only fair to Bergson to remember that he is himself aware of the appearances of this dualism in his writings, that he apologises as it were for them, intending the distinction to be, not absolute, but relative. "Let us say at the outset that the distinctions we are going to make will be too sharply drawn, just because we wish to define in instinct what is instinctive, and in intelligence what is intelligent, *whereas all concrete instinct is mingled with intelligence, as all real intelligence is penetrated by instinct.* Moreover [this is quite an important expression of Bergson's objection to the old "faculty" psychology], *neither intelligence nor instinct lends itself to rigid definition; they are tendencies and not things.* Also it must not be forgotten that . . . we are considering intelligence and *instinct as going out of life* which deposits them along its course" (*Creative Evolution*, p. 143).

<sup>2</sup> He talks in the *Creative Evolution* of a "real time" and a "pure duration" of a real duration that "bites" into things and leaves on them the mark of its tooth, of a "ceaseless upspringing of something new," of "our progress in pure duration," or a "movement which creates at once the intellectuality of mind and the materiality of things" (p. 217). I have no hesitation in saying that all this is unthinkable to me, and that it might indeed be criticised by Rationalism as inconsistent with our highest and most real view of things.

which he is always speaking as the very life and texture of everything. This "real" or "pure" "duration" is a thing that troubles all students of his philosophy; it seems to make Bergson believe in what James talked of as a "strung-along" universe. And there is an inconsistency between the supremacy that he seems willing to accord to mind and spirit in the case of the new individuals who are always being born into the world, and the absence of a similar supremacy (or determining rôle) in the case of the mind or spirit without whose existence and operation the universe is unthinkable.<sup>1</sup>

As for the latter contradiction, we may note in his favour that he talks, at least once or twice, of "God" as "unceasing life"<sup>2</sup> and "active freedom," and I am inclined to take this master thought as possibly a kind of foundation for his rich and suggestive philosophy of life and reality. But there is in his writings nothing like the thorough-going attempt that we find in the philosophy of Aristotle<sup>3</sup> to ground the motion and the life of

<sup>1</sup> He admits himself that "If our analysis is correct, it is consciousness, or rather supra-consciousness that is at the origin of life" (*Creative Evolution*, p. 275).

<sup>2</sup> "Now, if the same kind of action is going on everywhere, whether it is that which is striving to remake itself, I simply express this probable similitude when I speak of a centre *from which worlds shoot out as rockets in a fireworks display*—provided, however, that I do not present [there is a great idea here, a true piece of 'Kantianism'] this centre as a *thing*, but as a continuity of shooting out. God thus defined *has nothing of the already made*. He is *unceasing life, action, freedom*. Creation so conceived is not a mystery; we experience it in ourselves when we act freely" (*Creative Evolution*, p. 262).

<sup>3</sup> See p. 155, note 1.

the world in God as its final cause and its ultimate explanation. Equally little is there in Bergson a thorough-going attempt to work out the Idealism<sup>1</sup> upon which his whole system reposes—his initial conception of objects as “images,” or “ideas” for a consciousness, or for the life-force, or for the different “centres of activity” with which he peoples the worlds.

Fourthly, there is the drawback from the point of view of social philosophy about the thought of Bergson to which we have already made reference—that it lacks somehow the ethical and the social idealism that would warrant us in thinking of it as a worthy rival or substitute for the philosophy of history of the great idealists of the

<sup>1</sup> It is somewhat difficult, and it is not necessary for our purposes, to explain what might be meant by the “Idealism” of Bergson—at least in the sense of a cosmology, a theory of the “real.” It is claimed for him, and he claims for himself that he is in a sense both an “idealist” and a “realist,” believing at once (1) that matter is an “abstraction” (an unreality), and (2) that there is more in matter than the qualities revealed by our perceptions. [We must remember that he objects to the idea of qualities in things in the old static sense. “*There are no things; there are only actions.*”] What we might mean by his initial idealism is the following: “*Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of images. And by ‘image’ we mean [Matter and Memory, the Introduction] a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing—an existence placed half-way between the ‘thing’ and the ‘representation.’ This conception of matter is simply that of common sense.*” . . . “For common sense, then, the object exists in itself, and, on the other hand, the object is in itself pictorial, as we perceive it: *image it is, but a self-existing image.*” Now, this very idea of a “self-existing image” implies to me the whole idealism of philosophy, and Bergson is not free of it. And, of course, as we have surely seen, his “creative-evolution” philosophy is a stupendous piece of idealism, but an idealism moreover to which the science of the day is also inclining.

past and the present. It is necessary to speak here with the utmost caution if we would avoid doing injustice<sup>1</sup> to Bergson. We cannot mean, for example, that he does not do justice<sup>2</sup> to the social factor in human development<sup>3</sup> of which we have heard so much, perhaps too much, from the sociologists.<sup>3</sup> We might mean, however, and we do in a sense mean that he has not made as much as he might have done of this factor, by developing for the thought of to-day the reality of that world of "spiritual communion" and "inter-

<sup>1</sup> There is so much that is positive and valuable in his teaching, that he is but little affected by formal criticism.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "We have now enumerated a few of the essential features of human intelligence. But we have hitherto considered the individual in isolation, without taking account of social life. *In reality man is a being who lives in society.* If it be true [even] that the human intellect aims at fabrication, we must add that, for that as well as other purposes, it is associated with *other intellects*. Now it is difficult to imagine a society whose members do not communicate by signs," etc. etc. (*Creative Evolution*, p. 166). Indeed all readers of Bergson know that he is constantly making use of the social factor and of "co-operation" by way of accounting for the general advance of mankind. It may be appropriate in this same connexion to cite the magnificent passage towards the close of *Creative Evolution* in which he rises to the very heights of the idea [Schopenhauer and Hartmann had it before him, and also before the socialists and the collectivists] of humanity's being possibly able to surmount even the greatest of the obstacles that beset it in its onward path: "As the smallest grain of dust [*Creative Evolution*, pp. 285-6] is bound up with our entire solar system, drawn along with it in that undivided movement of descent which is materiality itself, so all organised beings, from the humblest to the highest, . . . do but evidence a single impulsion, the inverse of the movement of matter, and in itself indivisible. All the living hold together, and all yield to the same tremendous push. The animal takes its stand on the plant, man bestrides animality, and the whole of humanity, in space and in time, is one immense army galloping beside and before and behind each of us in an overwhelming charge to beat down every resistance and clear the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 160 and p. 262.



subjective intercourse " of which we have spoken more than once.

Then we might also contend that Bergson has not as yet, in his philosophy of human life, taken much cognizance of the deeper<sup>1</sup> experiences of life, of the specifically ethical and religious feelings and thoughts of men. With the pragmatists he is unduly optimistic about the free expansive development of the individual. Against this objection it may be replied, that he has so thoroughly assimilated into the very texture of his thought and feeling some of the finest things in the spiritualism and the idealism of the reflective thought of France<sup>2</sup> that we would not, if we could, wish the germinal or fructifying elements in his system to be different from what they are. His "social" message is perhaps after all the best thing that it can be—the need of the inward spiritualization of the life and thought of the individual.

Lastly, in addition to the fine traditional

<sup>1</sup> He comes in sight of some of them, as he often does of so many things. "It is as if a vague and formless being, whom we may call, as we will [*C.E.*, p. 281], man or superman, had sought to realise himself, and had succeeded only by abandoning a part of himself on the way. The losses are represented by the rest of the animal world, and even by the vegetable world, at least in what these have that is positive and above the accidents of evolution."

<sup>2</sup> From what has been said in this chapter about Bergson, and from the remarks that were made in the second chapter about Renouvier and the French Critical Philosophy, the reader may perhaps be willing to admit that our Anglo-American Transcendental philosophy would perhaps not have been so abstract and so rationalistic had it devoted more attention, than it has evidently given, to some of the more representative French thinkers of the nineteenth century.

spiritualism and libertarianism of French philosophy, we may think of the voluntarism of Kant and Schopenhauer as also militating somewhat against the idea of Bergson's originality<sup>1</sup> in philosophy. Despite this it is still possible to regard him as one of important, modern, exponents of just that development of the Kantian philosophy that became imperative after Darwinism. He has indeed inaugurated for us that reading of the "theory of knowledge" in terms of the "theory of life"<sup>2</sup> which is his true and real continua-

<sup>1</sup> We must remember that nowhere in his writings does Bergson claim any great originality for his many illuminative points of view. He is at once far too much of a catholic scholar (in the matter of the history of philosophy, say), and far too much of a scientist (a man in living touch with the realities and the theories of the science of the day) for this. His findings about life and mind are the outcome of a broad study of the considerations of science and of history and of criticism. By way, for example, of a quotation from a scientific work upon biology that seems to me to reveal some apparent basis in fact (as seen by naturalists) for the "creative evolution" upon which Bergson bases his philosophy, I append the following: "We have gone far enough to see that the development of an organism from an egg is a *truly wonderful process*. We need but go back again and look at the marvellous simplicity of the egg to be convinced of it. Not only do cells *differentiate*, but cell-groups *act together like well-drilled battalions*, cleaving apart here; fusing together there, forming protective coverings or communicating channels, *apparently creating out of nothing*, a whole set of nutritive and reproductive organs, all in orderly and progressive sequence, producing in the end that orderly disposed cell aggregate, that individual life unit which we know as an earthworm. Although *the forces involved are beyond our ken*, the grosser processes are evident" (Needham, *General Biology*, p. 175; italics mine). Of course it is evident from his books that Bergson does not take much account of such difficult facts and topics as the mistakes of instinct, etc. And I have just spoken of his optimistic avoidance of some of the deeper problems of the moral and spiritual life of man.

<sup>2</sup> "This amounts to saying that the *theory of knowledge* and *theory of life* seem to us inseparable [*Creative Evolution*, p. xiii.; italics Bergson's]. A theory of life that is not accompanied by a criticism of knowledge is obliged to accept, as they stand, the concepts which the

tion of the critical work of Kant. Hypothetical although it may be in many respects, it moves (owing to his thorough absorption in the many facts and theories of the biology of recent years) in an atmosphere that is altogether above the confines of the physical and the mathematical<sup>1</sup> sciences with which alone Kant was (in the main) directly acquainted. It is time that, with the help he affords in his free handling of the facts of life and of the supposed facts and theories of science, we should transform the exiguous "epistemology"<sup>2</sup> of the past generation into the more perfect hold upon "criticism" and upon the life of things that is represented in his thought.

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understanding puts at its disposal: it can but enclose the facts, willing or not, in pre-existing frames which it regards as ultimate. It thus obtains a symbolism which is convenient, perhaps even necessary to positive science, but not a direct vision of its object."

<sup>1</sup> I more than agree with Bergson that our whole modern philosophy since Descartes has been unduly influenced by physics and mathematics. And I deplore the fact that the "New Realism" which has come upon us by way of a reaction (see p. 53) from the subjectivism of Pragmatism, should be travelling apparently in this backward direction—away, to say the very least, from some of the things clearly seen even by biologists and psychologists. See p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> As I have indicated in my Preface, I am certainly the last person in the world to affect to disparage the importance of the thin end of the wedge of Critical Idealism introduced into the English-speaking world by Green and the Cairds, and their first followers (like the writers in the old Seth-Haldane, *Essays on Philosophical Criticism*). Their theory of knowledge, or "epistemology," was simply everything to the impoverished condition of our philosophy at the time, but, as Bergson points out, it still left many of us [the fault perhaps was our own, to some extent] in the position of "taking" the scientific reading of the world as *so far true*, and of thinking that we had done well in philosophy when we simply partly "transformed" it. The really important thing was to see *with this epistemology* that the scientific reading of the world is not in any sense initial "fact" for philosophy.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

ENOUGH has now been said in the foregoing pages about Pragmatism and the philosophy of Actionism in relation to Rationalism, and to the Personalism and the Humanism that they would substitute for it and for Absolutism. Indications have been given too of the shortcomings and the defects of this very Personalism or Humanism, and of some of the different lines along which it would require to be reconsidered and developed to constitute a satisfactory philosophy. In addition to some of the greater names in the history of philosophy, I have referred—in the footnotes and elsewhere—to the thoughts and the works of living writers who might be profitably studied by the reader in this connexion.

Pragmatism is in some respects but a sociological or an anthropological doctrine significant of the rediscovery by our age of the doctrine of man, and of its desire to accord to this doctrine the importance that is its due. It represented, to begin with (in its Instrumentalism chiefly), the

discontent of a dying century with the weight of its own creations in the realm of science and theory along with a newer and fresher consciousness of the fact that there can be no rigid separation of philosophy from the general thought and practice of mankind. And even if we accept this idea of the supremacy of the doctrine of man over both philosophy and science, this does not mean that we exalt the worker and the prophet over all knowledge, but simply that philosophy must have a theory of reality that provides for their existence and function alongside of those of the thinker or the student as such. The true philosophy is in fact the true doctrine of man.

Another lesson that we may learn from Pragmatism and Humanism is the truth of the contention that there can be no philosophy without assumptions of one kind or another, without facts and intuitions and immediate experiences. A philosophy itself is an act or a creation, representative of the attention of the thinker to certain aspects of his experience and of the experience of the world which he shares with other thinkers and with other agents. And, as Bergson has reminded us, it is often the great intuition underlying the attention and the thought of a philosopher that is of more worth to the world than the dialectic, or the logic, through the aid of which it is set forth and elaborated. This latter he may frequently have inherited or absorbed from the schools of his time.



The reason why the idealists and the dialecticians of our time have so often fought shy of beginning with the immediate or the "given," is partly that they are not yet in their thoughts perfectly free of some taint or tincture of the supposed realism or dualism of the common-sense philosophy or the correspondence view of truth. They seem to have the fear that if they admit a given element of fact in speculation they will unconsciously be admitting that there is something outside thought and immediate experience in the true sense of these terms. In this fear they are forgetful of the great lesson of Idealism that there is nothing "outside" thought and consciousness, no "object" without a "subject," that the world is "phenomenal" of a great experience, which they and other men are engaged in interpreting, and of which we may all become directly conscious. And while to God the end of all experiences and processes is known from the beginning, or apart from the mere time and space limitations that affect us as finite beings, it is still true that for us as men and as thinkers the reality of things is not "given" apart from the contribution to it that we ourselves make in our responsive and in our creative activity. In contending, therefore, for the reality, in every philosophy, of this assumption of ourselves and of the working value of our thought and of our activity, Pragmatism has been contending in its own fashion for the great doctrine of the sovereignty of the spirit which (when properly inter-

preted) is the one thing that can indeed recall the modern mind out of its endless dispersion and distraction, and out of its reputed present indifference. It is in the placing of this great reality before the world, or, rather, of the view of human nature that makes it a possibility, and in intelligibility, that (in my opinion) the significance of Pragmatism consists, along with that of the various doctrines with which it may be naturally associated. There are many indications in the best thought and practice of our time that humanity is again awakening to a creative and a self-determinative view of itself, of its experience, and of its powers. Of the presuppositions and the conditions under which this idea may be regarded as true and intelligible I have already spoken. Its proper interpretation, however, along with the exposition of the metaphysic upon which it must be made to repose, is at least part of the work of the philosophy of the future—if philosophy is true to its task of leading and guiding the thought of mankind.



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